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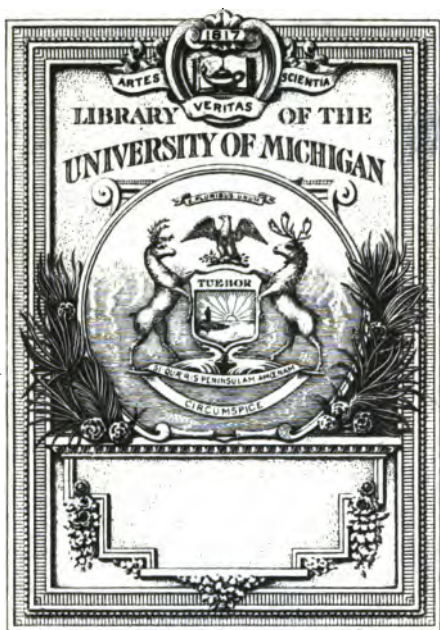
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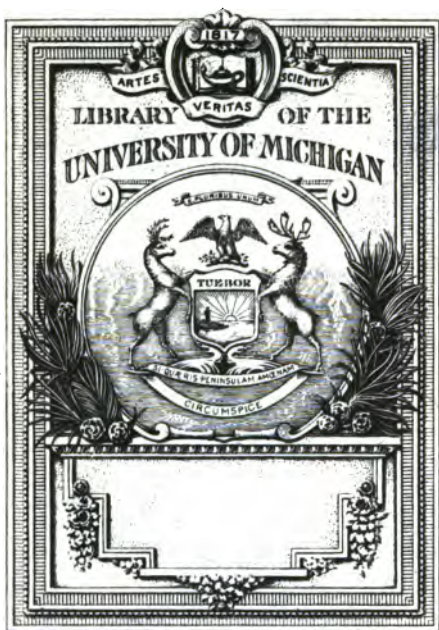
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**T H E   S T A G E :**  
**B O T H   B E F O R E**  
**A N D**  
**B E H I N D   T H E   C U R T A I N ,**

**FROM**  
**"OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE SPOT."**

**BY ALFRED BUNN,**  
**LATE LESSEE OF THE THEATRES ROYAL DRURY LANE AND**  
**COVENT GARDEN.**

**"I am (not) forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house."  
HAMLET, ACT I. SC. V.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. II.**

**RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,**  
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## ERRATA IN VOL. II.

- Page 5, 8 line from bottom, *after the word patent add of the.*  
 13, last line, *for unnatural read not unnatural.*  
 26, 9 line from top, *for is read are.*  
 43, 5 — top, *for are read is.*  
 44, 2 — top, *for remains read remain.*  
 89, 13 — top, *for his read her.*  
 101, in note, 6 line from bottom, *for ou read où.*  
 102, in note, 4 line from bottom, *for de théâtre read du théâtre.*  
 151, 14 line from bottom, *for In this read In such.*  
 166, penultimate line, *for work read labour.*  
 184, last line of Contents of Chapter VIII., *for desert read dessert.*  
 190, 6 — bottom, *for aldermannic read aldermanic.*  
 195, 9 — top, *after arms add him.*  
 240, 8 line from top, *for yes read yet.*  
 265, 8 — bottom, *for ever read even.*  
 284, first line of note, *for you read the reader.*  
 302, 8 line from top *for parvenue read parvenu.*  
 302, 15 — top *for parcourus, read parcouru.*

Tom Dibdin, and *his annual dinner—*  
 bran — — — — — Page 1

## CHAPTER II.

Overclouding of the horizon—Refusal of a good part, and acting of a  
 bad one—Difference between pageantry and performance—The  
*Bridal Contract*—Breach of promise—Reading a new piece—An

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# THE STAGE:

BOTH

## BEFORE AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

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### CHAPTER I.

Reduction of prices, and consequent reduction of character—Difference of views taken in and out of Parliament—Mr. Kemble's theory and practice opposed to one another—Mr. Farley—"Stars" self-nominated—Olympic company superior to the Covent Garden one—Cheap postage no benefit—Auber and Rodwell—Doctor O'Toole and Doctor Yates—The Provost of Bruges—Mr. R. B. Peake's frolics—Proposed illumination for the return of legitimacy—Not enough money taken to pay for it—Miss Joanna Baillie and Sir Walter Scott—Theatrical funds, and their annual dinners—Tom Dibdin, and *his* annual dinner—Marriage certificate of Malibran.

THE reduction of the prices at Covent Garden Theatre, the nature of the performances to which that reduction led, and the manner in which those performances were prepared, created a greater revolution in the theatrical world than had ever yet taken

place, not excepting the unprecedented circumstance of uniting the two theatres. Nor is it to be wondered at. If it did nothing else, it turned into complete ridicule all the efforts the parties accessory to this desecration of their property had been for two successive sessions of parliament making to uphold it.

In the memorial the proprietors had on these occasions addressed to the Lord Chamberlain, and in the petition they preferred to the House of Commons, they studiously pointed out to his lordship, and to that one branch of the legislature, the stipulations they had expressly made with their lessee, that "their theatre should be conducted as Covent Garden has always been accustomed to be conducted"—they made this stipulation, most certainly in their lease with me. I *did* so conduct it; and on a diminution of £1,500 per annum in the rent, I offered to do so again, for, *by* doing so, I knew I should be in a position to appeal to parliament for protection, in the event of any fresh invasion of the patent rights that had been leased to me. It will, moreover, be found, on a reference to Sir William Davenant's patent, that it authorises "his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, to receive such sum or sums of money as was, or thereafter from time to time should be, ACCUSTOMED to be given or taken in other play-houses and places for the like plays, scenes, presentations, and entertainments!" It may be argued, that though this is an authority for demanding high prices, it is not a prohibition against taking low

ones. Virtually I think it is—inasmuch as it having been “customary” to take seven shillings to the boxes, there could be no contemplation of such a degrading reduction, that reduction *not* having been “customary.” It appeared to me they were, by making it, flying in the face of the very patent, whose prerogative they had been so lustily fighting to defend; and assuredly they were falsifying all the fine sayings they had been preaching up. It would be a difficult argument to sustain, that, reducing the prices to 4s., 2s., and 1s., and presenting on that stage the common pieces which had been worn out at the Surrey Theatre, was “conducting Covent Garden Theatre in the manner it had been *accus-tomed* to be conducted.”

When, in the year 1832, that redoubtable display of mummery, entitled “a select committee on dramatic literature,” was entertained, under the chairmanship of Mr. T. S. Duncombe, M.P. and Mr. E. L. Bulwer, M.P., Mr. Charles Kemble was asked, (*question* 628,) “whether he thought the price of admission “could not be lowered a great deal?”—And he replied, “I do not think it could, so as to give that “perfection of performance which you are now in “the habit of witnessing in those theatres!”—and again, (*question* 714,) when interrogated as to lowering the prices giving satisfaction to the public, he returned for answer, “I do not believe we should “have one person more in the theatre if we did!!!” With all this evidence lingering on his memory, as



the result of his judgment, still Mr. Charles Kemble was a party to the leasing of Covent Garden Theatre *expressly to be opened at these reduced prices*, thereby entirely converting it to a minor theatre! It is not to be supposed that his object was a selfish one. Yet it is somewhat singular, that in a preceding part of his evidence before this "select committee," (*question 611*), when asked, "Is a minor theatre able to give a larger salary to an eminent performer than a larger theatre?" his response was, "It may for a moment, for the sake of opposition. A man having no capital embarked in a theatre of this sort may say, 'My aim must be to weaken my adversary, therefore I will offer an eminent actor double the money he gets at the other theatre :' and I am sorry there are TOO MANY OF US incapable of *resisting applications of that description*." It can scarcely be imagined that a gentleman, maintaining such an opinion, consented to the conversion of his own major into a minor house, merely to have an opportunity of carrying that opinion out: but it is extraordinary that his own subsequent actions bore testimony to his antecedent judgment; for he became "one of those incapable of resisting" the offer of a tempting payment, having, immediately after the humiliation of Covent Garden Theatre, engaged himself to his tenant on a high nightly salary.

This inconsistency between conduct and opinion in a person of Mr. Charles Kemble's talents and station in his profession, was calculated to effect a con-

siderable alteration in the aspect of theatrical affairs, and no doubt would have done so, had not his own share in the matter completely verified his own assertions. Mr. Kemble's observation that those reduced prices would not bring one person more into the theatre was fully borne out in the longrun, and consequently the establishment had all the disgrace, without any of the advantages, of the speculation. It was an undertaking based in error, and not altogether clothed with integrity. Very large sums of money had years back been paid by the present occupiers of private boxes, in the full expectation that the tenants of them would be provided with the same class of entertainment, and the same degree of talent, as far as possible, that had hitherto sustained the reputation of that theatre; and that, before the curtain, the same class of society and the same order of decorum would be received and preserved as heretofore. They made the large investments in those boxes upon the faith of the proprietors of the theatre, and were as fully justified in appealing to them to keep that faith inviolate, as the proprietors were in appealing to parliament, and stating that they had invested large sums of money upon the patent theatre, on the faith of the crown. They were equally amenable to the shareholders, who had made such heavy advances, under the impression that the faith of the crown and that of the proprietors was coeval. It was, therefore, a very questionable measure in point of probity, and in every other respect it was a disgraceful and a ruinous one. The result of it at

the time was a failure, and it has since had the effect of lessening the character of both the patent theatres in public estimation, while it has left an unnecessary slur upon the profession, the reputation of which is not sufficiently fortified to bear any additional indignity. Beside Mr. Charles Kemble's own able testimony, submitted to the committee of the House of Commons, he had the warnings of many writers and friends, capable of giving sound advice, decrying the commission of a step, the consequences of which it was impossible to foresee ;\* but "Obadiah per-

\* The alienation of feeling produced by this degradation of Covent Garden Theatre cannot be better conveyed than in the following few lines from a gentleman whose industry and great abilities so many years contributed to its fortunes and reputation. They are in reply to a letter I thought it due to myself to write to Mr. Farley, expressive of the regret I felt then, and have since, at being unable to offer an engagement to one of the most gentlemanly and willing officers that ever were attached to the staff of a commander :

" 3, Hart Street, Bloomsbury,

" Oct. 1, 1835.

" My dear Sir, and late Commander,

" Permit me to offer you my best thanks for the kind note you favoured me with last evening, and believe me it is with equal regret that you are prevented enlisting me under your banner in the ensuing campaign, in which I wish you *a most decided victory* ; and believe me to be,

" Most truly and loyally,

" (though not in service) Yours,

" CHARLES FARLEY.

" I have for several years had the entrée of Drury Lane, and the privilege of bringing a friend : am I asking too much in requesting a continuance of *that favour* ?"

sisted, and the mule threw him." Covent Garden was opened upon the worst principle of a minor establishment, that of having a miserable company to support one or two exotics, who had adopted the poet's exquisite line, where, in apostrophising the heavenly bodies, he exclaims,—

" Fortune, fame, POWER, life, *have named themselves* A STAR!! "

The prices were the same as those of the Olympic ; but the performances to be supported by Miss Wrihten, Mrs. West, Mr. Vale, and Mr. Morley, were not as likely to be patronised as those entrusted to the talent of Madame Vestris, Mrs. Orger, Mr. Liston, and Mr. Keeley. As there was no attraction in the entertainment, people were not disposed to pay even four shillings to sit in a large building, where they were sure to be disgusted. Had the company and their representations been on a par with those the people had hitherto been accustomed to in this theatre, it would have been altogether another affair : but as it must have been well known that the average houses to be expected from such prices could not cover the expenses attendant upon such arrangements, and as it had been asserted—too truly—that the reduction of prices would not bring a greater number of people into the building, the result might have been anticipated.

Is there any man, in his senses, believes that the contemplated reduction of postage will turn out otherwise than a fearful loss to the income of the

country, and such a loss, that the substitution of some other and much more offensive tax will have to be provided to make up the deficiency? It may answer the purpose of those who are deriving the profit of some newly-established situation in connexion with the alteration, to argue to the contrary; but, as the Welsh say, "*wait* you" until the year of probation be passed, until the novelty has died away, and the deficiency in the revenue return made manifest, and then you'll hear the truth. The labouring man's necessities of life will have to pay for the abolition of a charge onerous to very few classes of society, a matter of indifference to a great portion of it, and of no relief whatever to the poor. This is not a country for cheap commodities; and, above all, in matters of taste or amusement. If it had not been for the fortunate result of *The Jewess*, so unconcerned is the public generally about either theatre, and was especially so at this juncture, that with the disgrace of one, the downfall of both might have been accomplished.

Amongst other disadvantages arising out of the manner in which the patent theatres have so long been conducted, may be classed that rivalry in the production of novelties which is generally ruinous to all parties, and that nothing but the classification of performance, I yet hope to see established in them, can possibly prevent. As I have observed already, one example is better than fifty arguments. With the view of following up the success of *The Jewess*, I had

been preparing Auber's opera of the *Bronze Horse* on a very extensive and a very expensive scale. It was placed in the hands of the best singers of the day, the music arranged to be given entire, its incidental ballet superintended by a Parisian master, and the paraphernalia of the *mise en scene* prepared on gorgeous and characteristic scale. It had been begun before Covent Garden Theatre had a tenant, but temporarily laid aside for the production of *The Jewess*, during the run of which it was again taken up and finished. Notwithstanding all this outlay, and notwithstanding my own conviction and my rival's knowledge that he did not possess the materials to do it any degree of justice, "AUBER'S LAST NEW OPERA OF THE BRONZE HORSE" was announced for representation at Covent Garden by an operatic company incapable of singing the music, with scarcely a chorus singer or dancer, and without, I believe, the expenditure of £50. Instead of it being "AUBER'S *last* opera," it was (at least a great part of it) "RODWELL'S *last* opera"—another, among the many of my friend George's waggeries.\* Not but what Rodwell is a man of great talent, and an opera from him, advertised as

\* Whenever Covent Garden or Drury Lane Theatres are to be let, it is invariably insinuated in all theatrical circles, followed up by paragraphs in all the papers, that Mr. Rodwell has made an offer for the one advertised. The Cockneys swallow this for a day or two, and Rodwell, though too modest a man to insert such things about himself, believes it himself for another day or two; but the only theatre he has taken, or is likely to take, is the one that is to be "let *alone*."

such, is a very welcome visiter; still he is not **MONSIEUR AUBER**. The object of all this could be but to forestall the operations of Drury Lane, and, by being first in the field, to throw cold water on any similar subject that appeared afterwards. The same attempt was subsequently made, this same season, with Herold's opera of *Zampa*; and though in both instances the result recoiled upon the schemers of the scheme, the intention was the same; and had it been attended with any degree of favour, the labour and expense which had been incurred at Drury Lane might have been neutralised by the parsimony and false expedition at Covent Garden; but these are more of the delights of management.

A singular instance of the further trials to which the stage, or rather its director, is exposed, occurred at this time. I was beset by several people, and especially by the individual himself, to give a comparative stranger to the London boards a trial in the character of **DOCTOR O'TOOLE**. The exorbitant price paid for Mr. Power's talent, and the hopelessness of finding any one, for some time past, able to compete with it, rendered the accession of a successful representative of Irish character of the first consequence. Mr. Macarthy was therefore allowed his probation, and, by his own urgent request, a repetition of the part was granted. His performance gave no indication of his being enabled to fill the desired post, and with as much regard to what the gentleman was pleased to call his reputation, as could consistently

be paid, his further services were dispensed with. Notwithstanding the testimony of my acting manager, Mr. Yates, by whom the whole arrangement was conducted, that no idea of an engagement had ever been entertained, the doctors differed as usual—*Doctor O'Toole* contending that he played for an engagement, and by playing was entitled to one, and Doctor Yates contending for the very reverse. The consequence was, that, without the shadow of a plea for making any claim, an action was brought against me to maintain one; and time and money, which might both have been so much better employed, were wasted in the defence. The learned judge (one always calls them learned by custom, and not from any knowledge of their exalted attainments) suggested that the matter should be referred, and it accordingly was, to a perfect gentleman and sound lawyer, Mr. Wheatley. For above two months this farce of reference was going on—examination following examination, to arrive at the exact state of the case. The award was finally made, and notice served upon the plaintiff that it was ready to be taken up. Taking it up involved a further outlay of twenty guineas, and the Doctor, either not having as many fees at his command, or, apprehensive of the result, declined the disbursement. The defendant in such cases is not, I believe, compelled “to take it up:” but having occupied the time and the chambers of a stranger, who had treated me with great courtesy, I could not be a party to any questionable measure,



and therefore, at the risk of the award being given against me, my attorney paid the said amount of the expense upon it. Not only was it made completely in my favour, but the plaintiff was saddled with all costs. They amounted to something considerable, and having had a wanton action brought against me by one who had no visible means of defraying its charge, I naturally was apprehensive for the repayment of what I had expended in defending it. My repayment consisted of "a notice from the Insolvent Court," which eventually discharged with a sponge the amount in full. If the manager had not given the Doctor a trial, he would have been denounced as a man who discouraged every applicant of talent; on giving it, an attempt is made to saddle his treasury with an utterly useless engagement, and that not succeeding, the manager, merely for the defence of his own rights and the vindication of his own character, has at last to pay considerably more than the Doctor's engagement for the whole season would have come to. "The pleasures of management," in three volumes octavo, could be soon filled up at this rate.

A slight reference having been made to the production of the *Provost of Bruges* and its attraction, there cannot be a much better opportunity selected for the entertainment of a question much agitated at this time, and one that has created considerable controversy. Whenever a piece becomes sufficiently attractive to be played night after night in uninterrupted succession, (as was now the case with the *Jewess*, which

ran SIXTY-FOUR subsequent evenings,) the manager is assailed with the complaints of the performers who have to play in it, on the score of fatigue—with the complaints of the performers who do *not* happen to play in it, on the score of neglect—and with the abuse of all persons enjoying a free admission, whether by gift or purchase, on the score of a want of variety in the amusements they are thus privileged to see. Post after post brought me, at the period in question, anonymous letters to this effect; and day after day those newspapers which admit such kind of contributions, publicly adopted a similar tone. With the view of silencing all these grumblers, and also of proving that the patronage of *spectacle* had not caused any neglect of the higher walks of the drama, the *Provost of Bruges*, a work of high literary character, was put into rehearsal and produced. It was backed, on the first night of representation, by a new farce from the prolific pen of my humorous friend, Mr. Peake,\* and it was unnatural to suppose

\* The subjoined note will show that the feeling I have alluded to was rife at the time. Mr. Peake had produced, some time previous at Covent Garden Theatre, an unsuccessful farce, and not liking altogether to oppose my judgment against that of so able a writer, I merely stated my belief that this farce would share the fate of its immediate predecessor. Mr. Peake, who has been very fortunate in neck or nothing sort of pieces, was, however, disposed to differ with me, and to try the experiment :

“ 14, University Street, Jan. 16, 1836.

“ My dear Bunn,

“ Do you want a *Pantomime* to succeed your *Pantomime*? When I say this, do you want a broad comic piece in *three very short acts*, (my own and original,) in which your long unemployed comedians may appear: there are good parts for *Farren, Harley, Bartley, Mea-*

that a return from the glitter of pageantry to the sedater, and, as it is facetiously called, more legitimate offspring of the dramatic muse, would not only be acceptable but profitable. It was not unnatural to suppose that the great body of the discontented, who had been so clamorous many weeks past for the full display of their talent, possessed admirers enough to support a theatre offering them the unusual novelty of a new tragedy and a new farce on the same evening. Surely here was legitimacy enough in all conscience. Here was an opportunity for the broken-hearted public to come and see their pet performers, who, by the tyranny of their manager, had been kept from their gaze of worship for thirteen successive weeks! One would have thought that some general manifestation of the people would have taken place on the occasion—that statues of the former would have been erected, and the effigies of the latter been burnt in the street. What! a new tragedy with Mr. Macready in it, followed by a new farce with Messrs. Farren, Bartley,

*dows, &c. &c. &c.*, the whole *corps-de-ballet* would be required, and the masquerade dresses of *Gustavus*. No expense, saving the author, *who cannot afford to be damned this time*. To give an idea of the *outré* nature of this piece, the whole *dramatis personæ* (Farren excepted) have to *dance* throughout the third act.

“If my production escaped on the first night, (and from its pleasantry I think it would,) I should be sure of a merry run.

“A line will bring me to the theatre.

“*Scene*.—London and Kensington.

“*Time*.—1746.

“Yours very truly,

“R. B. PEAKE, *An ex-treasurer*.

“A. Bunn, Esq. &c. &c. &c.”

and Harley in it, played each for the first time on the same night! Why, after the outcry that had been raised, there ought to have been a general illumination!

Notwithstanding all this, the illuminated, to whatever other spot of earth they went, did not come to the theatre, as will be seen by this statement:

The 1st night of <i>The Provost of Bruges, and the new farce</i> , produced				£136	11	0
The 2nd.	do.	do.	(without the new farce)	110	4	6
The 3rd.	do.	do.		186	6	0
The 4th.	do.	do.	(when owing to the failure of the new farce, it was backed by the JEWESS!!)	255	17	0
The 5th.	do.	do.		187	12	6
The 6th.	do.	do.		132	10	0
The 7th.	do.	do.		117	11	0
The 8th.	do.	do.		151	16	6

On each of these nights, the expense of the theatre exceeded 220*l.* exclusive of the sum of 20*l.* payable to the author of the tragedy, and a comparative remuneration to the author of the farce. On an experiment, therefore, of only eight nights, there was incurred a loss on each of them of 90*l.*, whereas, if the more attractive novelties had not been suspended, there would probably have been a nightly gain of equal amount. It will be noticed, I presume, that on the only occasion on which this legitimate tragedy was played to the current expenses, or pretty nearly so, of the evening, it was bolstered up by the very piece (the *Jewess*) which gave rise to all the hubbub.

“ Can it be possible? My aunt Deborah, who set such a value on herself, going for half-a-crown?” What! gentlemen who think themselves the finest set of actors under the sun, and receive 30*l.* a week, playing to almost empty benches! What can the public be thinking about? Is there no discrimination, no judgment, no taste left? or what *does* it mean? Why, it means neither more nor less than this,—that until the stage is in possession of genuine talent, of performers whose minds are of that high order, which will first of all prevent the genius of the dramatist being marred, and, next to such consideration, his genius even made more apparent—that until some master spirit shall arise capable of uniting a congenial mind with those lofty ones, whose works belong to that stage, the people will not attend the representation of plays which are purely of mental construction. Men with heads upon their shoulders are not to be dragooned into the notion that the *ipse dixit* of any one, particularly an actor, is public opinion. The parties here referred to, may “strut and fret” their “hour” to the end of time, but they cannot alter this position of things; and as sure as I have eight fingers and two thumbs, so sure is it, that they will not much longer have any arena to “strut and fret” in, if their pretensions are not reduced to the level of other persons’ ideas, rather than their own.

It is melancholy to reflect upon the vicissitudes to which the dramatic literature of the country is sub-

ject. Any man in the direction of a national theatre, who has a spark of discernment in his composition, must feel a desire to make that theatre the medium of introducing to his audience the plays of such an eminent writer as Miss Joanna Baillie. In a correspondence I was some years since honoured with by Sir Walter Scott, that great man, in modestly endeavouring to impress upon my mind his own incompetency to dramatic writing, forcibly maintained the superiority of his gifted countrywoman, and directed my particular attention to some of her plays. Circumstances stood in the way of my following the sage's counsel; and if one had dared to differ from such authority, I should have ventured to suggest that very few among the playgoing portion of the public are endowed with a tithe part of the powers of appreciation which led him to such selections. The publication, however, at this period of some noble dramas from the pen of Miss Baillie, which had not hitherto met the public eye, and which imparted an additional lustre to the halo wherewith fame had already encircled her name, offered a temptation and an opportunity not to be resisted. I took the liberty of consulting the pleasure of the poetess, from whom I received this flattering encouragement:

“ Hampstead, Monday Morning, March 14.

“ SIR,

“ I am very much gratified by your proposed production of the Tragedy of *Henriquez* in your

“ theatre, and feel myself also much obliged by your  
“ expressing a wish that I should see the representa-  
“ tion, and the offer of convenient places. I do not  
“ by any means wish to be present the first night ; but  
“ should the play prove successful and continue to  
“ be acted, I should be very glad to avail myself of  
“ your kindness, and to have a private box for  
“ one night, as nearly on a level with the stage as  
“ may be conveniently arranged. If you give me  
“ leave then, I shall take the liberty of giving you  
“ notice in good time before I go.

“ Wishing, for your sake as well as my own, that  
“ the piece may be prosperous,

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your truly obliged

“ And obedient servant,

“ J. BAILLIE.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.”

*Henriquez* was produced with every possible attention, possessing moreover the unquestioned advantage of a renowned authorship. Its performance, “with appliances and means to boot,” brought but a receipt of 145*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.*, while the production of Herold’s Opera of *Zampa*, a night or two afterwards, realised the sum of 257*l.* 15*s.* Joanna Baillie and Monsieur Herold ! Oh, mon Dieu ! What is the inference to be drawn ? If a manager has not, by his own performance, the vanity of an actor to gratify, he can have but one object—to fill his treasury by the most

credible means in his power. If, therefore, the public preferred the tingling melodies of the one to the mental materials of the other writer, in the proportion which 257 bears to 145, the manager must be possessed of more philosophy than I confess I have at my command, that could have declined, at all events as far as his actions went, to coincide with that public. It was impossible, without the continuance of a frightful loss, to keep *Henriquez* before the town, and with deep regret I was compelled to bow to the decision of Mr. Justice *Midas*,

“ *Pol* quits the plain, and *Pan* remains.”

If enough has not been said to convince the reader, by a mere demonstration of figures, that the downfall of the English stage is daily being accelerated, and will at last be brought about by its professors, he shall have plenty more matter for the digestion of argument. England being the only refined and enlightened part of Europe where the stage has been suffered so to verge towards decay, and where also the *corps dramatique* is so much beyond the authority of the director, and the common correction of the laws, it may not be unjust to that body to direct their serious attention to the situation in which they stand, and in which they prefer to stand, before the final extinction of the temples they profess to worship in be consummated. The liberal encouragement given to the London performers, for their exertions to please, should not be looked upon as an encouragement to



the pecuniary demands they make for those exertions ; and unless the actor consents to draw the line of distinction, " to live and let live," to be satisfied with an honourable and reasonable remuneration, and not tax too strongly the public sympathy, under a false impression of public approval, the scene of his actions will not much longer survive. The perpetual inroads made upon the credulity of the people, by unnecessary or unwarranted appeals, ought to be abolished altogether, or they will so suffer by neglect, as to carry their own destruction. With every disposition to admit the admirable object which led to the institution of THE THEATRICAL FUNDS, it is impossible to deny that it has been shamefully abused.

The theatrical profession, like many others, is one of a very precarious nature, and its professors, unlike a great many others, are apt to render it more so. But these are matters with which the public have very little to do ; who, paying liberally (as far as their numbers go) for what they see, and knowing how more than liberally these professors are for the most part paid, should not be called upon by extra taxation, through the medium of annual dinners, to make up for the wanton extravagance of ill-regulated people. The contributions of the profession itself to these funds ought to be ample for the support of its decayed members, so that those who have had a reasonable income all the best part of their lives should not be placed in a position to have to apply again to the public to provide for their latter days. The funds

both of Covent Garden and Drury Lane are rich, and do not need the prop of the public—were they otherwise, they ought not to ask for it. “To *be* poor, and to *seem* poor,” is a maxim that few of the community wish to illustrate in their own persons; but the performers, as if proud of their disgrace, are the first to proclaim it in the halls of festive mirth and revelry. The intolerable quantity of mendacious rhodomontade delivered by “THE MASTER” on these occasions is, in my humble judgment, reprehensible in the extreme; and nothing can be more humiliating than the secrets into which, for the furtherance of his appeal, the speaker thinks fit to go.

These “anniversary” exhibitions are becoming a greater infliction at every celebration—because, as the stage degenerates, the sympathies of an assembly are appealed to in behalf of a set of people that very few present know anything, and none care anything, about. It is not unnatural to suppose that a charitable feeling would be excited towards any favourite performer who, by sheer misfortune, not folly, had fallen into difficulties; nor is it altogether unnatural to make an appeal for such particular favourite, under particular circumstances: but it becomes a very different case when that call is made year after year in favour of a number of people, whom the necessities or the misapplications of the London stage transport from Dunstable, “and there,” to the precincts of Duke Bedford’s dramatic realm. The world, while it wept over the distresses of some spoiled but favourite child of for-

tune, would be disposed, without any consideration of the "whys" or the "wherefores," to alleviate those distresses ; but who on earth can take any interest in "MR. THIS, from the Theatre Royal Penzance," or "Mrs. That, from the Theatre Royal, Tadcaster?" It is only part and parcel of the system upon which performers in this country generally act, and whose course of conduct will eventually shut up all their avenues of revenues. It is a system acted upon in no other part of the habitable globe ; and the indisputable fact that the only distinguished European state where so little dramatic talent is to be found, is the one where exorbitant prices are paid for its littleness, will sooner or later be the cause of the utter prostration of the art.

Contrast the necessities of a body (having a rich fund to go to, ably supported by the annual contributions of its members) with those of the literary drudge, who for years has toiled in their service, and has no such resource to fly to. At the very period of their this year's festivity, an instance of the kind in question occurred. While some of the *dramatis personæ*, whose talents he had written for, were feasting in tavern halls, the author, lately released from the desolation of a gaol, was almost wanting bread, and, to gain a temporary mouthful, sent me this note :

" March 7, 1836.

" DEAR SIR,

" I take the liberty of presuming on your former kindness, so far as to ask, whether, on so serious an occasion (to *me*) as my taking a last benefit after

“ so many years of public service, you will be good  
“ enough to permit such of the ladies and gentle-  
“ men of your company as can be spared for half an  
“ hour or an hour from Drury Lane Theatre, (and  
“ who are willing so to do,) to assist me on the 18th  
“ inst. at the Olympic Theatre. Mrs. Fizwilliam, in  
“ recollection of *auld lang syne* at the Surrey, is one  
“ who is anxious to serve me, as is also an humble  
“ but attached friend, Mr. Hartland; for them and  
“ others arrangements will be made, should you per-  
“ mit, to prevent their appearance for me interfering  
“ with their duty at your theatre.

“ His Majesty being one of my patrons, I am the  
“ more anxious to render the performances creditable;  
“ and respectfully hoping I may be favoured with  
“ the kindness of your reply in as short a time as  
“ possible, and for which I will wait or call again at  
“ the stage-door,

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ With due deference,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ T. DIBDIN.

“ P.S.—I have ventured to trouble you with the  
“ perusal of my announce bill.

“ A. Bunn, Esq.”

If I had wanted “a mouthful” myself, I hope I should not have refused the request I had such pleasure in granting—knowing, and regretting, alas! that while many a brainless fellow has a snug annuity from his fund, “Poor Tom’s a cold,” without any fund to lean upon.

An event occurred at this time, in the final result of which the feeling of all the playgoing population of the world were deeply interested. The engagement which had been some time since concluded with Madame Malibran, was within a few weeks of its beginning ; and from motives best known to herself, and of very little moment to any one but the parties concerned, she entered into the ceremony of marriage with Monsieur De Beriot, in ratification of the friendship that had long existed between them. As an item of some curiosity, a copy of the annulment of her former marriage, procured in the previous March, and extracted from the judgment of the Tribunal de Premiere Instance at Paris, is subjoined : “ Déclare  
 “ nul, et de nul effet, le mariage contracté le 23  
 “ Mars, 1826, à New York, entre Marie Felicité  
 “ Garcia, née à Paris le 24 Mars, 1808, et François  
 “ Eugène Louis Malibran, né à Paris le 15 Novem-  
 “ bre, 1778, devant Charles Louis d'Espinville, Con-  
 “ sul de France à New York, y remplissant les fonc-  
 “ tions attribuées à l'officier public chargé de con-  
 “ stater l'état civil des Français Autorise, en conse-  
 “ quence, la Demoiselle Garcia à faire insérer le pre-  
 “ sent jugement en marge de tous actes, de tous  
 “ registres, où aurait été inscrit le dit mariage.”

The result of her double engagement, theatrical and matrimonial, will soon have to be scrutinised and recorded, in the beautiful but fatal truth laid down by the poet,

“ All that's bright must fade,  
 “ The brightest, e'en the fleetest.”

## CHAPTER II.

Overclouding of the horizon—Refusal of a good part, and acting of a bad one—Difference between pageantry and performance—The *Bridal* Contract—Breach of promise—Reading a new piece—An actor's benefit and a manager's benefit by no means the same—Various views of degradation—"The ruling passion strong in death"—Pieces and after-pieces—Temper, and the effects of a bad one—Practice and preaching—Mr. Macready's quarrels with all his managers—No one's opinion of him equal to his own—Mr. Grattan's nose—Mr. Serjeant Talfourd—Mr. Macready's appearance and speech at Covent Garden—Presentation of *Ion*—Talfourd's law a libel—Difference of attraction between Malibran and Macready as great as between their talents—Talfourd's ideas of himself and his tragedies.

THE spirit of dissatisfaction had overclouded the goodly fellowship existing for many years between Mr. Macready and myself the greater part of this season. It began to manifest itself with the unprecedented success of the *Jewess*, (the leading character in which he had refused to play,) which was a source of not altogether unnatural annoyance to a performer, the public appreciation of whom did not keep

pace with his own ambition. The total absence of all attraction in any pieces he played in, and the unequalled attraction of the one he had declined playing in, were matters of galling reflection. But a calm survey of the case ought to have convinced him, as I am sure it will every considerate mind, that no blame herein could by possibility be fixed on the management. Talk what you please, and write more than has ever yet been written, there is no means of maintaining the argument, that a manager can control the public taste. He may try to direct it, but it will return at last to its own natural tendency. That Mr. Macready is a man of considerable abilities is unquestionable; but (and I deliver my opinion without any feeling of acrimony arising from our altered position) that he is not an eminent Shaksperian actor, is equally unquestionable. His order of acting belongs to another school, nor will the public at large ever be made to think to the contrary, despite the profound eulogy of a few foolish parasites. The power vested in him by virtue of his recent station as a manager has not been able to substantiate this aim of his professional existence, for the false credit attached to his production of some of the great bard's plays, betrayed the truth it was intended they should illustrate in a different manner. *Coriolanus* was prepared with elaborate care; but while thousands formerly flocked to see the late Mr. Kemble in that play, without such advantageous

preparation, very few hundreds came to see Mr. Macready, though surrounded by all the glories of stage accomplishment. A perseverance in the representation of such dramas as were best suited to his feelings and his pride, would be fatal to any manager; and my own impression is, that Mr. Macready would have continued one, had he found it otherwise.

The uninterrupted "*run*" of the *Jewess*, and the opera it was played in conjunction with, naturally debarred from any participation in the nightly favour of the public those performers not included in the representation of either; and, as I have before observed, this extended to a period of thirteen weeks. I can understand that it must be annoying, especially to an irritable man, to see one-third of a season occupied with performances in which he does not assist, and which without such assistance are still highly attractive; and at the same time to know that all the pieces in which he *did* perform, possessed no attraction whatever. It was, beyond a doubt, a sore point, but not one of *my* establishing; for had Mr. Macready accepted the fine part of *Eleazar*, the complaint could not have been preferred. It will be recollected, in this person's\* articles of engagement there is an express stipulation, that Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy of the *Bridal* should be produced

\* Those who are disposed to think this expression is a contumelious mode of defining one moving in the society of gentlemen, are referred to Mr. Macready's preface to the tragedy of the *Bridal*.



"immediately after Christmas," for the performance of which Mr. Macready, as the adapter, or in part arranger, was to receive 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per night for the first nine nights, and 100*l.* more on the twentieth; a sum, I should imagine, about four or five times more than the great poets who wrote the tragedy ever made by it. But let that pass. The cause of the marked expression "immediately after Christmas," though as well known to all other practised stagers as to the one who made the stipulation, may not appear manifest to a novice; and it is as well therefore to state, that by playing a piece supported by the pantomime, (which would be sure to keep the people out of the house, without that support,) not only would "the twentieth night" be reached, and the sum of 400*l.* be realised, but the popularity of the actor would be maintained. Mr. Macready has, in the preface alluded to, stated that this agreement was not fulfilled—I will say WHY. I felt as assured as a man can feel of anything, that if the performance of the *Jewess* were suspended, the fate of the season would be sealed; and that I should, in that case, be prevented altogether producing the play; whereas, by a slight delay until the fever for seeing that popular-novelty had partially subsided, I should be enabled to do it every justice. On Mr. Macready's demanding the production of the *Bridal*, and consequent suspension of the *Jewess*, this state of things was pointed out to him, but he seemed disposed to

have his "pound of flesh." It was subsequently "read"\* towards the end of January, but afterwards withdrawn by Mr. Macready, to make way for *The Provost of Bruges*. That the precise agreement was not fulfilled, from the justifiable circumstance mentioned, is true enough; but as "immediately after Christmas" would imply the first week in January, and the *Bridal* was read the 26th of that month, the breach was not a very flagrant one. Although the occurrence excited a certain degree of ill blood, it subsided, and things went on tolerably smooth until the period of Easter arrived, when the receipts of the theatre had, as they then invariably do, fallen very seriously; and to prop them up as much as possible, every variety of entertainment was resorted to.

The national theatres of this country are not, like those of the continent, supported by government—they are matters of private speculation; and although manager must defer as much as possible to public opinion and taste, he should do it in a manner most calculated to repay such speculation. Having had so many seasons to provide amusement for, at least,

\* A stranger to the stage should know, that "reading" a piece in the green-room, previous to its production, was a plan originally adopted for the purpose of possessing every performer engaged in it of the general character of such piece: but "reading" one, now-a-days, affords an opportunity, seized upon by those performers, to decline the parts allotted to them, if they find that better ones are allotted to others.

two hundred nights in each, I have frequently turned my attention to that kind of entertainment an actor provides on the only night of a season when *his* ingenuity is so taxed, viz. HIS BENEFIT NIGHT; and I did so at the present time. On the 25th of January, this year, 1836—(nothing like being particular)—Mr. Macready performed, for his own benefit at Bristol, in one act of Shakspeare's Second Part of *Henry Fourth*, and, after the introduction of some trifling intermediate matter, in Knowles's play of *William Tell* as the afterpiece. In addition to my impression that what Mr. Macready had selected for his *own* advantage was likely to be conducive to *mine*, I knew that I should thus be enabled to give this very play (then representing at the opposite house for 4*s.* to the boxes) for 3*s.* 6*d.*, by placing it as the second piece, instead of the first.

This order of things was by no means uncommon, for most of the plays Mr. Macready this year played in, were supported by the full Operas of *Gustavus the Third*, *the Bronze Horse*, *the Corsair*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Der Freischutz*, *Masaniello*, &c. &c. The point of degradation, therefore, which was attempted to be set up was "sheer nonsense"—it could be no more degrading to Mr. Macready to play after Mr. H. Phillips, Mr. Templeton, Miss Shirreff and others, than it could be for them to play after Mr. Macready. Mr. Macready had, moreover, for his own benefit in this very theatre, in 1825,

played in *Rob Roy*\* (a part, it will be remembered, he now stipulated *not* to play) AFTER *Henry Fifth*; and for his benefit in 1834, the full opera of the *Lord of the Manor* was played after his attempt at the personation of *King Lear*. But precedent upon precedent of such arrangement could be furnished, if necessary; and knowing that, it never entered my head, in announcing *William Tell* as the last piece—so recently performed by him as such—that any objection would arise. Nothing, however, would induce Mr. Macready to perform the character in the

\* Elliston gave me a more humorous illustration of “THE RULING PASSION STRONG IN DEATH” with regard to this part, than I ever before laughed at. Macready was at one time alarmingly ill—indeed so ill, that the most serious consequences were anticipated, and the most desponding steps taken, such as the administration of the sacrament, &c. Elliston called to see him, and was admitted into the chamber of the sick tragedian, who faintly implied a belief in his approaching dissolution. Elliston expressed a strong hope of his recovery; and, with deep regret at his prostration, an offer of his services, and a strong injunction to the family that he should be kept perfectly quiet, glided on tiptoe out of the apartment. He had not reached the bottom of the staircase, when a voice, in an audible whisper, reached his ears, saying, “Mr. Elliston, Mr. Elliston, step up for one moment, Mr. Macready wishes to speak to you.” He ascended softly, and approached the bed of the dying man, in the conviction that some posthumous attention was about to be required at his hands. After Elliston had addressed him in the calmest and most soothing manner, he gave a slight indication of temporary relief, and then in broken accents he thus languidly delivered himself: “El—list—on,—do—you thi—nk that *Rob Roy*, re—duced to—two—acts, would be—a good—afterpiece—for—my—benefit?”

situation announced, unless my stage manager undertook, in my absence, that he should never be called on to do a similar thing; which undertaking, to preserve peace and quiet, Mr. Cooper gave, and which determination Mr. Macready persevered in, although her Majesty expressed a wish for the Second Part of Shakspeare's *Henry Fourth* to be the second piece, on the occasion of her visit at this time. Foiled in this object, I adopted another expedient, resorted to frequently by performers; a practice which even Mr. Kean had availed himself of, and which, as I have just remarked, Mr. Macready had put in force FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT at Bristol—*id est*, performing PART of a play of Shakspeare. It will undoubtedly be argued by his partisans, that there is a vast deal of difference between a performance for a benefit, and those which should characterise the national stage in its ordinary operations. If the stage had any support beyond the ingenuity of the manager, there might be some reason in such argument; and if performers, not worth more than £15 a week, would not demand £30, that would make a material difference; but when the sole object of performers is to get out of their manager all they can, I conceive he is perfectly justified in following their example. With the view, therefore, of diversifying the entertainments as much as possible, and in that diversity not exceeding the customary length of an evening's performances, I announced three acts

of *Richard the Third*, *the Jewess*, and one act of *Chevy Chase*. I solemnly avow that, in making this selection, I had no more idea of wounding Mr. Macready's feelings than if he had not been in the theatre. I never once thought whether it would please or displease him, my object being solely to make out as effective a bill as I could.

On Friday the 29th April, I was sitting at my desk, a few minutes before nine o'clock, and by the light of a lamp, so shaded as to reflect on the table, but obscure the room generally, I was examining bills and documents, previous to their payment on the following morning; when, without the slightest note of preparation, my door was opened, and after an ejaculation of "There, you villain, take that—and that!" I was knocked down, one of my eyes completely closed up, the ankle of my left leg, which I am in the habit of passing round the leg of the chair when writing, violently sprained, my person plentifully soiled with blood, lamp oil, and ink, the table upset, and *Richard the Third* holding me down. On my naturally inquiring if he meant to murder me, and on his replying in the affirmative, I made a struggle for it, threw him off, and got up on my one leg, holding him fast by the collar, and finally succeeded in getting him down on the sofa, where, mutilated as I was, I would have made him "remember ME," but for the interposition of the people who had soon filled the room. Had I had the remotest idea of the

visit, I should not only have been prepared, but not very particularly alarmed for the result, because,

“ I was most ready to return a blow,  
And would not brook at all this sort of thing,  
In my hot youth—when George the Third was King !”

but this was nothing more nor less than stabbing a man in the dark. If the provocation had been never so great, nothing could justify such a mode of resenting it. But I maintain there was no provocation given—certainly none was intended. I knew he was displeased at the circumstance of being announced to play in *William Tell* as a last piece; but if a manager were to attend either to the pleasure or displeasure of performers, in the fearless and unprejudiced discharge of his duty, he could not keep his theatre open. I had not seen Mr. Macready to speak to him for some time; and beyond the necessary communications between us through the stage manager, nothing whatever had passed. If it had not been for his subsequent line of conduct, I should have attributed his attack to an ebullition of the unfortunate temper with which he is cursed. Between pride, vanity, and irritability, his passions are sometimes ungovernable. The system upon which he afterwards acted, betrayed the fact that he was actuated by a feeling of concentrated hatred and malice. Let us examine the simple question of “what reason could I possibly have for annoying Mr. Macready?” We had been for years on intimate terms,

in evidence of which, were there none other, I have some of the most humorous and friendly letters of his now in my portfolio. I personally liked Mr. Macready; and as to the nonsense of my wanting to get rid of his engagement, I laugh at it now, as I did then. Had I not wanted and wished his services, there was no necessity for entering into so onerous an engagement. I conceived myself to be the party annoyed. His refusal to join the rest of the company in a temporary suspension of a part of their salaries (though perfectly at liberty to exercise his own discretion, and quite right to be prudent with an *impecunious* man) was an annoyance—his refusal to play in the *Jewess*\* was another—his requiring me to lay aside the profitable performance of that spectacle and the *Siege of Rochelle*, (though he was justified, I freely admit, in so doing by the conditions of our agreement,) was another—his refusal to repeat *William Tell* as an after-piece (which had brought a much better half-price than there was a whole one) was another—his going down to Bristol without a

\* This was doubly so; because, at his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Macready delivered his opinion after the following fashion:—

“QUESTION 2352.—Are there not very great actors that engage to enter into all the business of the house?”

“ANSWER BY MR. MACREADY.—They *ought to do so* of course; it must be according to his profession. I do not conceive that a tragedian, for example, has any right to scruple to perform that character, supposing it to be the grade of *first, second, or third*, in which he was engaged!”



“with your leave or by your leave,” neglecting the reading and rehearsal of two tragedies called in his absence, and then demanding his London salary for the week he had been playing in the country, was another—and a very grievous one. There was plenty of cause given ME for being violent, but “I bore it with a patient shrug,” little thinking I had anything more to bear. It must never be lost sight of, that I only add one to the list of London managers with whom Mr. Macready has invariably differed—to use a mild phrase. His querulous bearing with the late Mr. Henry Harris and Mr. Elliston is well known. His quarrel with Mr. Charles Kemble in 1822 (only “amicably” adjusted after the outrage he committed on me) was such that, as has been already slightly alluded to, he wrote, and caused to be printed, a pamphlet reflecting in very strong terms on that gentleman and his co-partners, Messrs. Willet and Forbes. It is too libellous, coarse, and vulgar, to be inserted here, or I would reprint it for the benefit of the troublesome part of the community—if ever rendered necessary, it can always, and shall, be done. With Mr. Price, his difference was so great, and his attraction so little, that, as I have before observed, this gentleman ordered his treasurer to pay him £320, (being sixteen nights of an unexpired engagement at £20. per night,) for the mere purpose of getting rid of him; and he never spoke to Captain Polhill, for putting him in the character of *Iago*, from the moment of its announcement, till

the Captain left the theatre. In short, the fatal temper of Mr. Macready has been for years a by-word in the profession he belongs to, and it has subjected him to many severe and just rebukes.

It would be a subject as much worth inquiry as other trumpery subjects are, to examine into the reasons upon which Mr. Macready grounds his indomitable pride? Mr. Macready has had the advantages of a good education; but riper scholars than he is (though assuredly he is a good one) have adorned the stage ere now. His personal advantages\* will not bear the test of comparison, even as much as his mental ones, with some of his predecessors and contemporaries, and his theatrical station, despite either self-delusion or the misrepresentation of others, *is NOT a first-rate one*. Well may reflective people inquire, and then exclaim,

“Now in the names of all the gods at once,

“Upon what meat does this our Cæsar feed,

“That he is grown so great?”

The consequences to me of such an outrage at this particular moment were, notwithstanding the

\* On the subject of personal advantages, one is forcibly reminded of the admirable and good-humoured bon-mot of Mr. Grattan, the author of *Highways and Byways*, &c., who, during a residence by the sea-side, (I believe at Boulogne,) had rendered himself so very agreeable to his landlady and her family that, when he was about to leave, she expressed great regret, observing, she had at first taken a dislike to him; but such had been the urbanity of his manners, *she had even “got over” his nose!* “That’s impossible, my good lady,” replied Mr. Grattan, “for my nose has no bridge to it.”

sneers of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, more than any of a personal nature. I had just completed an opera, on which I had been engaged with Mr. Balfe, for Madame Malibran, whose first appearance for the season was fixed for the Monday following the assault. Her engagement (precisely the same as that of the last year, viz. £125 per night) was a matter involving the safety of the theatre, as well as of the unfortunate manager; for though the serjeant was pleased to say, on the trial that arose out of the attack, I preferred my own songs in the *Maid of Artois* to all the glories of Shakspeare, he knew, at the time he uttered such rubbish, that had Malibran been out of London, Shakspeare would not and could not have been acted, for two good and sufficient reasons—the want of actors, and the want of an audience. Mixed, therefore, as the engagement of Madame Malibran had become with the said opera, its production was paralysed for the time by the incapacity of the author and manager, who had to superintend its preparation, from being confined to his bed. I not only could not put my foot to the ground, but I had some doubts whether the state of my eye would not realise the words of a song in that opera, and prevent its seeing again “The light of other days.” And to these bodily grievances might be added the feelings of mortification at not having been prepared for their infliction, and being thereby enabled to pay the in-

flicker back in his own coin; and the knowledge that, by the delinquent's forfeiture of all claim to the treatment of a gentleman, no personal satisfaction could be obtained. If, however, after so gross an act of violence, the slightest indication of remorse, or advance towards atonement, had manifested itself, I should not, most likely, have placed the matter in the hands of the law; but the very contrary of such feeling being displayed by the man himself and the clique he was associated with, and one's own character requiring a refutation of the indignities they sought to heap upon it, the affair took its natural course. As if glorying in the act he had committed, and, for aught I know, seeking to favour me with a second edition of it, Mr. Macready, four days after so glaring a compromise of manhood and propriety addressed this letter to my stage manager:

"Chambers, May 3, 1836.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"As my benefit, by your previous intimation to me,  
"stands for the 24th inst., this is the day on which  
"the official notice enables me to proceed. As I am  
"anxious about the proper production of the tragedy  
"of *Ion*, I shall thank you to fix the earliest dis-  
"gaged day for the first rehearsal, and request you  
"will give me timely notice of it."

"Yours faithfully,

"W. C. MACREADY.

"J. Cooper, Esq."

The only reply such a communication could be entitled to was, that he would not again be permitted under any pretence whatever to enter the theatre. If anything could surprise me more than the deed he had done, it was the one he subsequently *did* do—instantly engage himself at Covent Garden Theatre, and play there the following week. My surprise was occasioned by his consenting, under any circumstances, to perform in a national theatre, whose degradation, owing to the reduction of prices, he had so stoutly reprobated throughout the season; and it became still stronger at seeing one who had hitherto held “so haught a crest,” so deservedly erect, pandering to the worst taste of a senseless mob, by making a dereliction from the rules of society the basis of establishing a degree of popularity he could not otherwise have attained. Inasmuch as the public has nothing whatever to do with the private circumstances of those who work for their amusement, so should they never be made a party to them, and, above all, where they are not of a reputable character. My impression of Mr. Macready was, that having been guilty of an act, in the heat of an unusually bad temper utterly beyond his control, which, on calm reflection, he could not possibly approve of, he would either have done the utmost in his power to repair the wrong he had committed, or bear the consequences in dignified silence. I was quite mistaken: for after his performance of *Macbeth*, on Wednesday, May 11, he delivered this address to the audience:

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

“Under ordinary circumstances I should receive  
“this manifestation of your kindness with silent ac-  
“knowledgments; but I cannot disguise from myself  
“the fact, that the circumstances which have led to  
“my engagement at this theatre, after an absence of  
“many years, are uppermost in your minds. Into  
“those circumstances I will not enter further than  
“two general observations: First, I was subjected,  
“in cold blood, from motives which I will not cha-  
“racterise, to a series of studied, and annoying, and  
“mortifying provocations, personal and professional.  
“The second—that, suffering under those accumu-  
“lated provocations, I was betrayed, in a moment of  
“unguarded passion, into an intemperate and impru-  
“dent act, for which I feel, and shall never cease to  
“feel, the deepest and most poignant self-reproach  
“and regret. I wish it to be distinctly understood,  
“ladies and gentlemen, that it is to *you* and to  
“*myself* I owe this declaration, and I make it with  
“unaffected sincerity. To liberal and generous  
“minds, I think I need say no more. I cannot,  
“however, at such a moment, resist thanking you,  
“and I do so most sincerely, most respectfully, and  
“indeed most gratefully, for these kind expressions  
“of your sympathy and favour.”

This composition is characterized by a want of truth, and a want of common decency. I utterly deny

having "studied," or of having even, intentionally, been guilty of any "annoying or mortifying provocation." On the contrary, I maintain, as I have endeavoured to prove, that I was the victim of many such. If, as this address implies, these provocations were of a personal nature, why did not Mr. Macready seek at my hands the satisfaction he would in such case be entitled to, and which, most assuredly, I would have given him. It was the least I could have done, had I been guilty of personally provoking one with whom I had been on terms of intimacy for many years—a charge, I again repeat, I utterly and fearlessly repudiate. If the "provocations" were of a professional nature, Mr. Macready's "article of engagement," than which nothing on earth could be more binding on his part, afforded him all the remedy he could require. While he expresses "the deepest and most poignant self-reproach and regret, he begs his auditors to understand **DISTINCTLY**, that "he owes the declaration only to *them* and to *himself*." Mark ye, he owes no expression of regret to the individual whom, solely by taking him unawares, and striking him in the dark, he had nearly murdered—for had he struck me two inches nearer the temporal artery, murder it would have been: his regret he deems due only to those who had nothing to do with the business, and to his own sweet self, who had been the cause of it. This precious harangue is wound up with a vote of thanks to the audience, for their "kind expressions of sympathy!" Pause over this sentence,

reader! SYMPATHY! Why, after this, a man may go upon Hounslow Heath, and, coming out afterwards on the stage, thank the public for "sympathising" with a highwayman. The difference of shades under such circumstances are but of a very slight texture between the performer and the footpad. Certain it is, that a planted party of *claqueurs* waved their hats and their handkerchiefs, and, as "honest Casca" says,

"Forgave him with all their hearts:

"But there's no heed to be taken of them; if Cæsar had stabb'd

"Their mothers, they would have done no less."

The circumstance altogether was strongly commented upon by all the respectable part of the press; and without unnecessarily swelling my pages with their remarks, I will content myself with transcribing these brief observations from the *Times* of Friday, May 13, 1836, in reference to Mr. Macready's speech:—

"As the transaction to which Mr. Macready alludes  
"was to be the subject of an investigation in a court  
"of law, we had purposely abstained from any notice  
"of it, because we were unwilling to prejudice the  
"public mind on a matter about to be submitted to  
"a public jury; but as Mr. Macready seems ashamed  
"of the extraordinary outrage which he committed,  
"we think it right to record this expression of his  
"contrition. In our opinion nothing can justify such



“ an outrage, and the circumstances under which Mr. Macready intimates that it was committed remains yet to be investigated.”

The “ investigation of the circumstances under which this outrage was committed ” *did* take place ; and upon that we will now enter.

I had been acquainted for some years with Mr. Serjeant Talfourd—not by any means approaching to intimacy—but still of that nature which justified, as it received, the interchange of civilities. Perhaps its character may best be gleaned from the subjoined correspondence. Nearly three years previous to Mr. Macready’s assault, the learned Serjeant had been anxious for the re-introduction of Mr. Cathcart to the London stage, and applied to me in his behalf, in a letter which will speak for itself better than I can speak for it :

“ Ramsgate, 25th September, 1833.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I venture to intrude on you, by forwarding the inclosed letter, which having been transmitted to my chambers by the writer, with the wish that I should solicit your attention to its contents, has been sent to me at this place, and thus has been some time delayed on its journey. I have not myself seen Mr. Cathcart for a long time, but I am assured by Miss Mitford that his power has greatly deepened, and the obstacles to its expression been

“ removed, since I witnessed his performances ; and  
“ certainly, as he *then* appeared to me, it seemed right  
“ that he should have a fair trial in the present state  
“ of the stage ; for although I am aware how apt one is  
“ to be deceived in the estimate of talent in the coun-  
“ try, he appeared to me to possess capability of a very  
“ high order, and to have at least a chance of signal  
“ success ; I therefore venture to urge the request  
“ which he makes to you. Assured that now the last  
“ and best hopes of the drama are committed to your  
“ charge, you will not refuse to any one whose pre-  
“ tensions may seem to you deserving of trial, an  
“ opportunity of trying his strength in a line which  
“ has at present one only great and legitimate sup-  
“ port, in Mr. Macready’s genius.

“ I heartily congratulate you on the engagement  
“ of Mrs. Sloman, who, even if she only returns to the  
“ London stage as she left it, is a far more genuine  
“ actress than has since appeared, and who, if she  
“ realise the expectations of her admirers at Canter-  
“ bury and Dovor, will rekindle the love of tragedy  
“ and renew its triumphs amongst us.

“ Begging you to excuse this freedom, and wishing  
“ you splendid success in your great enterprise,

“ I remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Very truly yours,

“ T. N. TALFOURD.

“ Alfred Bunn Esq.”

In replying to this letter, I stated the reasons that,

in my "humble judgment, militated against the engagement of the gentleman in whose welfare he was interested, which elicited a rejoinder, written in the Serjeant's usually fluent and agreeable style :

" 29, Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate,  
30th October, 1833.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" Accept my best thanks for your very kind and  
" flattering letter, which I have this morning received,  
" and which I hasten to answer. I was not aware  
" that Mr. Cathcart had ever been tried in Dublin in  
" that line of tragedy to which he now aspires, and  
" therefore I am unable to estimate the degree of  
" importance to be attached to his failure, if you have  
" been correctly informed\* respecting the fact that  
" he did fail on a fair trial. With respect to  
" his appearance at Covent Garden, I have never  
" concealed from myself, and it would ill become me  
" to attempt to varnish over to you, who have ex-  
" pressed so very kind a confidence in me, the disad-  
" vantage which must result from such circumstance  
" to a future attempt in London ; for although his  
" performance of *Jaffier* could scarcely be deemed a  
" failure in itself by those who witnessed it, still the  
" inference drawn from the fact that he did not repeat  
" it, must be that it was a failure. He was announced  
" to repeat the part on the following Monday, and

\* I was set right, by a polite letter from Mr. Cathcart, as to the character I had understood him to have failed in on the Dublin stage.

“ had he done so, would, I think, have obtained a  
“ footing in the theatre. But he had the misfortune  
“ to have Miss Smithson for his *Belvidera* ; a lady  
“ who, though she once was a very lovely girl, and  
“ though she possessed, at that time, the power of  
“ assuming very picturesque and striking attitudes,  
“ was, as he said, and as I can well believe, quite  
“ impracticable *to play with* in scenes like those in  
“ *Venice Preserved*, in which the poor weak lover is  
“ only sustained and justified by the passion of the  
“ lady. He felt this disadvantage so strongly, as  
“ having marred the effect of his first performance,  
“ that, to the grievous disappointment of all his  
“ friends, he either absolutely declined to play, or  
“ declined unless (which he had no right to expect) an  
“ engagement were ensured to him. At that time  
“ also he had some very awkward habits, especially  
“ of standing with his person thrown backward, from  
“ the knees, which Miss Mitford assures me he has  
“ quite overcome. In urging her wish and my own,  
“ however, that he should have another trial, I can-  
“ not deny that he will appear under the disadvan-  
“ tageous impression of having once failed ; and that  
“ he must show that decided talent which she confi-  
“ dently believes in, and which I have good hope  
“ that he possesses, in order to remove it. I am not  
“ sufficiently conversant with the interior of dramatic  
“ administration to be able to estimate the degree of  
“ risk or inconvenience you would yourself sustain in  
“ permitting the experiment ; but I should think, if

“ *Rienzi* were announced—which, perhaps, having  
“ Cooper and Miss Phillips, the original representa-  
“ tives of the two principal persons next to the hero,  
“ you might do without much trouble—that sufficient  
“ interest would be excited among a large circle  
“ who are aware of Miss Mitford’s opinion of Mr.  
“ Cathcart’s performance of that part, to ensure you a  
“ fair house, if not a great one. I should be very  
“ sorry to see you a loser in the essential point of  
“ money by making the experiment; but I think  
“ there is amply sufficient in the present state of the  
“ stage, to prevent you from suffering *in character*  
“ by the attempt, even if it should be a failure, or that  
“ moderate success which is as bad for both manager  
“ and performer. I saw him myself some years ago  
“ in *Rienzi* at Oxford; and it then seemed to me a  
“ very fervid and powerful piece of acting. I men-  
“ tion that fact, however, only by way of suggestion,  
“ in case you think fit to try him at that in which I  
“ think he would have the fairest chance, as exciting  
“ the interest of Miss Mitford’s friends, both critical  
“ and otherwise; and a thing most likely to attract,  
“ and to justify you, in the event of failure, to the  
“ world. It has also another advantage, that it has  
“ never been acted by Mr. Macready, nor indeed by  
“ any actor now on the metropolitan stage; Mr.  
“ Young only having made it his own. Admitting  
“ the disadvantage of the former appearance unfol-  
“ lowed by an engagement, I must leave it to your  
“ own sense of that which is due to yourself on the

“ one hand, and to the profession on the other, which  
 “ I know you will be disposed to employ liberally  
 “ and kindly, and which I cannot wish you should  
 “ use imprudently, to determine whether there is  
 “ sufficient ground to justify the bestowal of another  
 “ chance upon a gentleman whose pretensions are  
 “ not entirely unsupported, or whether he must dis-  
 “ miss all hope of bringing them before a London  
 “ audience.

“ I feel greatly honoured by the welcome compli-  
 “ ment which you announce to me;\* and with a deep  
 “ sense of your attention, however you may deter-  
 “ mine on the principal quarter in which I have thus  
 “ taxed your patience,

“ I remain,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ T. N. TALFOURD.

“ To Alfred Bunn, Esq.”

With this correspondence all communication between us ceased, beyond the frequent interchange of welcome, whenever I had the pleasure of meeting him behind the scenes of the theatre, until May, 1835, when I was favoured with the following letter, accompanying a presentation copy of *his* tragedy of *Ion* :

\* The pleasurable one I had before enjoyed, of placing the learned Serjeant on the free list of the theatre.

" 2, Elm Court, Temple,

" May, 2, 1835.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I take leave to request your acceptance of a  
" drama, a few copies of which have been printed  
" for private circulation only. As it has been writ-  
" ten out of mere love of theatrical enjoyments,  
" without any idea of its being acted, and with the  
" consciousness that it is unfit for representation,  
" you will not be bound by your managerial duties  
" to read a word of it. But I cannot present it to  
" my friends, for whose indulgent eyes alone it is  
" adapted, without gratifying myself by sending a  
" copy to you, *from whom I have received so much*  
" *unmerited civility*. With my heartiest wishes that  
" the cause of the Drama, to which I have always  
" been devoted, may prosper under your auspices,

" I remain,

" My dear Sir,

" Yours very faithfully.

" T. N. TALFOURD.

" To Alfred Bunn, Esq."

The reader is now in possession of the terms upon which Serjeant Talfourd and myself stood at the time of Mr. Macready's aggression ; and, without enlarging upon it, I will content myself by observing that, according to his own showing, he had received, from me "much unmerited civility." Now let us

see how he returned it—to my poor way of thinking, with much unmerited *incivility*.” We shall, however, see. It was but natural that, from the friendship subsisting between them, Serjeant Talfourd, in the capacity of either client or friend, would espouse the cause of Mr. Macready. To such a course neither surprise nor dissatisfaction could be expressed; but that it should be adopted at the expense of truth and propriety, both feelings were manifested by all acquainted with the circumstances. The action brought against Mr. Macready, in consequence of the defendant suffering judgment to go by default, was tried in the Sheriff’s Court, and was conducted, on my part, by Mr. Thessiger, one of the most eminent men at the bar, who justly designated the assault as “an atrocious, unmanly, dastardly, and cowardly”—nay, “a most wanton and unprovoked attack.” The defence set up by Serjeant Talfourd, instead of being confined to a proper expression of regret, was a luminous, or (to use a pun of the late Mr. Sheridan) rather a voluminous display of justification, and personal abuse of the very man from whom he confessed to have received so “much unmerited civility.” In stating that his client deplored “his haste, smarting under a sense of wrong, but that Mr. Bunn only thought of pounds, shillings, and pence in damages,” Serjeant Talfourd stated that which was not fact; for it was very properly observed by Mr. Thessiger, that, “while Mr. Bunn, since the gross outrage having been committed upon him, had acted



“ with the utmost temperance and caution, Mr. Macready and his friends of the press had taken every occasion to poison the public mind against Mr. Bunn,—no expression of sympathy for the sufferer had escaped the haughty lips of the tragedian ; and his last act, in coming to the court to-day to hear the verdict of the jury, was not an act of feeling, or atonement for his wrongs, but through the mouth of his eloquent, esteemed, and learned friend, (Serjeant Talfourd,) perhaps to add insult to injury.” It was impossible that the verdict could repay me, in a mere case of “ pounds, shillings, and pence ;” and had any other reparation been held out at the time, I should not have troubled myself at all about a verdict. The course I adopted was at the recommendation of some gentlemen of the highest abilities and most irreproachable characters to be found ; and it would indeed have been the introduction of a new code of nature’s laws, if a man were suffered to pass altogether unpunished for committing one of the most glaring acts of unmanly baseness. But the chief aim of Serjeant Talfourd, after a necessary attempt at the reduction of damages, was to puff up his client, as a Shaksperian actor, whose refulgent genius it had been attempted to eclipse by Mr. Bunn’s poetry in the *Maid of Artois*. If this had been true, there would have been some reason for such disparagement, considering that the genius of “ the Shaksperian actor ” was totally unequal to the task of attracting an audience that would meet

(or anything near it) the expenses of the establishment; while the said "poetry" was warbled by the exquisite tones of a *real* child of genius, who filled the theatre every night she performed. Pray let it not be supposed that I imagine my "poetry" had anything to do with this—Malibran would have done the same with the "London Primer," and could have done no more with the sublimest of Shakspeare's verses.

As to my own trifles, I unaffectedly assure any one who has ever had courage enough to wade through them, that I am as utterly reckless of the favourable reception they have on various occasions been favoured with, as I should be if they had been hissed from the stage. It would do the Serjeant no harm whatever if he thought as humbly (in proportion to the superiority I am willing to admit there is in his rhyme over mine own) of *his* compositions as I do of *mine*. But when this "learned pig" said, "Mr. Macready was "shelved, that the words of the songs of the *Maid of Artois* should be given to the public. How "polite, how modest is Mr. Bunn!—Mr. Bunn's "poetry against Shakspeare's *Richard the Third*!"—This I *will* say, in reply, (and it is not saying much after all,) that the songs in question are quite as good as the performance (Macready's *Richard the Third*) in question. Serjeant Talfourd wound up his pretty specimen of forensic display by stating, that "Mr. "Macready felt injured and insulted—he struck Mr.

“ Bunn, a scuffle ensued, and GENIUS, *right*, and “ STRENGTH triumphed !” Can a more insolent piece of legal mendacity than this be imagined ? One would think that the assault had been committed in a fair and open manner ; that we had a fight to see who was the best man, and that Mr. Macready, being the strongest, TRIUMPHED ! A person, for an imaginary injury, enters the room of another, and, the said room being in comparative darkness, half murders him ; and yet there is to be found a limb of the law to designate such conduct as “ the triumph of RIGHT and STRENGTH !” What the unfortunate word “ genius ” had to do with the conflict, Heaven only knows, unless it was that order of genius which conceives and carries into execution the glories of the Newgate Calendar ; but to assert that it was “ right ” to perpetrate the deed of a ruffian, and that it was “ strength ” which defeated a man rendered powerless by a treacherous aggression, almost before he knew who was his aggressor, is surely the very acme of human impudence, deception, meanness, and folly. I did not expect anything at Serjeant Talfourd’s hands beyond common courtesy ; but I certainly did not expect he would go out of the way to heap on me *uncommon* abuse. His speech was remarkable for a deficiency of reason, and a superabundance of frivolity ; for a display of gross flattery, without discernment, towards the defendant, and for a profusion of personal rudeness, without an atom of sense, directed against the plaintiff. I have,

on more occasions than one, been apprised of remarks that Mr. Serjeant Talfourd has been pleased to pass upon me, and I have been debarred, under a pledge, from taking any notice of them : but whenever he will do me the favour to make them in a more overt manner than his client acted towards me, I will endeavour, as overtly, to let him witness the triumph, at all events, of "RIGHT" and "STRENGTH." A latent object the learned Serjeant had in view, was to puff himself into greater notoriety than even the performance of his own "poetry" in the tragedy of *Ion* could then procure for him : at all events, to let the bar, through him, give a lift to the stage. Our jurisprudence, however, must be in a very questionable condition, when an advocate is obliged to resort to misrepresentation for the support of a bad cause, and can advance as truths a series of impertinences, which, if he were unprotected by the cloth of his calling, he would not venture, out of the precincts of Westminster Hall, to utter. Not only have I never given Serjeant Talfourd the slightest ground of offence, but I have on all occasions extended to him uncalled-for courtesies. I am not one of those who follow in the wake of this barrister's bleatings, because he forms one of a *clique* whose daily business of life is to cry up themselves, and to cry down every other soul upon earth. The tragedies of *Ion* and the *Athenian Captive* bear the stamp of a high order of talent, but the admiration of the public has not kept pace with that of their author, who, *Narcis-*

*sus*-like, will some day or other expire in the fountain of his own genius, absolutely out of self-love. And so much, at present, for "my learned friend," *Mr. Serjeant Talfourd*.

There was but one light in which this affair was viewed by all classes of society laying any claim to respectability; and now that the intemperate feelings which led to it have probably subsided, Mr. Macready may be assured he never lost grade until that occurrence, and that his character received thereby a self-inflicted wound, the cicatrice of which will not easily be effaced. The attentions that were shown to me on the occasion by noblemen and gentlemen of the highest rank were alone sufficient to convince me that such was a general feeling; and though it would ill become me to go through the ostentatious ceremony of displaying their names, yet the kindness which led them to evince towards me such regard has left an imperishable impress on my memory.

## CHAPTER III.

Illness and recovery—Production of the Maid of Artois—Criticism on Madame Malibran—Brilliant result of drinking a pint of porter—Ingenious mode of supplying it—Receipts to the performance of “Shakspeare’s representative” pitted against the receipts to Madame Malibran—Average of the monies taken during her respective visits to England—Cooper’s speech—Advertisement for a tenant—Benefits, or otherwise, of an Act of Parliament—The late and present lessee of Drury Lane—Elliston, and the late Mr. Calcraft, M.P.—The worth of a patent, and the number of claimants upon it—A “feast of reason and a flow of soul” at the “Piazza”—A speech, and an advertisement extraordinary.

HOWEVER troublesome and tedious the progress of recovery from so sudden an attack on a frame by no means so thin and genteel as it was wont to be, the delay it occasioned in the production of the new opera for Madame Malibran was a much more important affair. I could not entrust that production to any other, (and above all to another “learned friend,” Mr. Cooper, then the stage manager,) because, as author and manager, the entire preparation had devolved upon me, and it would have taken me more time, even had my condition admitted of it, to have

instilled my crude notions into the noddle of another, than it did in the first instance to devise them. It should be borne in mind that Madame Malibran could not remain in England beyond a given time, and that if even she could, the London season was waning fast apace. There were but two characters, *La Son-nambula* and *Fidelio*, in which she was prepared; and although their attraction was but slightly abated, every repetition of either tended to abate it the more. It would have been no difficult task to have proved "special damages," as will be presently shown; and if I had been only thinking, as Mr. Serjeant Talfourd observed, "of pounds, shillings, and pence," assuredly I should have gone for them—but I was only thinking how soon I could get on the Drury Lane stage. I went there upon crutches to attend the last six rehearsals of the *Maid of Artois*, which was eventually represented on the 26th May. The effect produced by Madame Malibran upon the town in the character of *Isoline* made amends for every indignity, and for every pang, that had been endured.

With those inflated people, who are in the habit of decrying everything which is not their own, it were waste of words to argue; and with persons of competent judgment, acknowledged science, and refined taste, argument is unnecessary: it will be therefore only reminding them of what they know already, in saying that this opera contains some of the most exquisite passages of modern composition, and fully confirmed the impression Mr. Balfe's genius had created by the

previous production of the *Siege of Rochelle*. I will not trust myself to say what I think of its matchless execution by Madame Malibran, but prefer the opinions of a writer who may be supposed to be less prejudiced, is a better judge, though not a more zealous admirer, and has a highly cultivated "mind for music." The following, amongst other remarks, appeared in the *Morning Post* of May 28th, 1836, (the morning following the first performance,) and are entitled to attention, as conveying a critical, however enthusiastic, encomium on this gifted child of song :

"The first act is in Paris. The opening scene discovers a view of the Boulevards at the end of the last century. The illuminated mansion of the marquis in the distance, the fountains and basin, and the whole stage laid out with intersecting trees, had a very pretty effect. Male and female citizens, soldiers, &c., are discovered carousing. The chorus, 'Drink, boys, drink,' is spirited, and introduces a cavatina of *Sans Regret*, 'What in this World can sadden,' which was cleverly sung by Giubelei. The *Marquis* enters during the festival, and sings a flowing melody, 'The Rosy hours.' It was given by Phillips in a chaste and expressive manner, but does not call for any particular remarks. *Jules de Montangon* then appears. He is careworn, and exhausted with fatigue. His tale is one of blighted affection. He seeks a maiden whom he has fondly loved, and by whom he thought he had been beloved. She had



“ left him, and the place of her birth, and, as he  
“ supposes, to live with the *Marquis*. Broken-  
“ hearted as he is, he resolves to save her from  
“ further depravity by a last effort to obtain an in-  
“ terview, and persuade her to leave the protection  
“ of the man whom *Jules* thinks is her seducer.  
“ Resting for a moment in the Boulevards, he is ac-  
“ costed by *Sans Regret*, who, by proffer of assist-  
“ ance, enlists him unwittingly in the army. The  
“ duet between Templeton and Giubelei in this scene  
“ is well designed and developed. The former has  
“ some delicious phrases, and he made the most of  
“ them. The concerted piece succeeding this, in  
“ which *Jules*, as a recruit, is carried off by force, is  
“ extremely bold and fanciful. The chorus, ‘Come  
“ follow with us,’ is particularly effective, and was  
“ repeated a second time. Previous to the seizure of  
“ *Jules*, he learns from *Coralie*, whom he acci-  
“ dently meets, that his mistress is virtuous and  
“ faithful, and that she has been seized by violence,  
“ and conveyed to the *Marquis’s* palace. It is  
“ agreed that he shall see his lost love at night. The  
“ next scene is an apartment in the *Marquis’s* pa-  
“ lace, in which he avows his passion for *Isoline*,  
“ and his determination to crush his rival, who  
“ the sergeant informs him is in his power as a  
“ refractory soldier, having refused to obey the orders  
“ of the service into which he had been inveigled.  
“ The last scene of the first act then takes place  
“ in the grand saloon of the palace. *Isoline* (the

“Maid of Artois) is discovered in a swoon, surrounded by attendants. They chant a low mournful cry of distress, and as *Isoline* wakes to consciousness, she begins the recitative of the long and difficult scena, ‘The Heart that once has fondly teem’d.’

“*The reception of MADAME MALIBRAN, as may be supposed, was very great, and her presence was felt to be a decided impetus to the interest. She left little time for comment on her appropriate costume. The masterly light and shade in her singing of the recitative, her intense and refined expression, and the novel and musician-like graces and ornaments which she introduced in the succeeding passages, brought down a torrent of approbation. Her clear and powerful voice, her wonderful skill in executing roulades, chromatic phrases, and shakes, the richness and volume of her contralto notes, and the precision, brilliancy, and variety of her cadences, defy all description, and set at nought all criticism. To hear her in this scena sing the phrase, ‘I’d dash the bauble down,’ is of itself a memorable point of recollection. The intonation and whirlwind of notes on the word DASH, for grandeur of purpose and dignity of musical sentiment, were never surpassed in vocal or histrionic effect. This alone would have stamped her as a woman of extraordinary genius. Of the composition itself we cannot now pretend to write. Our faculty of thought, by MALIBRAN’S electrifying execution,*

“ *was taken from us, and in that respect we were*  
“ *only in the same position as the whole audience,*  
“ *for her astounding compass left them the only choice*  
“ *of cheering vehemently.* A duet succeeded this  
“ *scena between Isoline and the Marquis, ‘O leave*  
“ *me not thus lonely.’* He induces her to consent  
“ *to be his, on the condition that Jules be saved from*  
“ *the consequences of his resistance to the military*  
“ *authority.* Phillips and Malibran sang it, of course,  
“ *like consummate artists.* A ballad, ‘Yon moon o’er  
“ *the Mountains,’ follows by Isoline, which is charm-*  
“ *ingly written.* The interview between her and  
“ *Jules then takes place, and was acted by Malibran*  
“ *with that giving up of her whole soul to the ac-*  
“ *tual situation, which so peculiarly characterizes*  
“ *her.* The plaintive and tender tones of her speak-  
“ *ing voice, and the fascinating naïveté with which*  
“ *she proves to Jules her innocence and affection*  
“ *for him, made their way to the sympathies of her*  
“ *auditory.* The finale then ensues. It is decidedly  
“ *the best music in this act.* It begins with a fine  
“ *trio, quite a gem in its way, partaking much of the*  
“ *character of a round, if not a perfect one, between*  
“ *Isoline, Jules, and the Marquis.* The latter, who  
“ *has overheard the lovers speak of their intended*  
“ *flight, rushes upon Jules, but is disarmed, and*  
“ *falls seemingly mortally wounded.* The soldiers,  
“ *attendants, &c., all come in, and the conflicting,*  
“ *emotions of the various parties are powerfully de-*  
“ *picted.* Here MALIBRAN makes a tremendous hit  
“ *in the magnificent exclamation when she seizes*

*“from the breast of the MARQUIS the paper of the enlistment of JULES. Her triumphant cry that she had got the evidence in her possession, and her wild energy in tearing the document to pieces, caused a considerable sensation, which was, however, still further increased by her desperate struggles to hinder the separation from JULES. There was a fearful reality in her exertions, which proved the utter self-abandonment of the actress to the delusion of the scene. In the midst of this she has to sing, and does sing, some complex music to wind up the act. The curtain fell amidst overwhelming applause, and Malibran was unanimously called for.*

*“The second act occurs in Guiana, in the interior of the fort of Sinamari. Soldiers, Indians, and convicts are mingled together. An animated chorus is sung, which is well conceived and written, the European and Indian music being blended together with much tact and judgment. Synnelet, the master of the works, has a very fine air, ‘Was there ever such a set,’ capitally done by E. Seguin, who, by the way, made a great deal of a trifling part, which shows the capabilities of Balfe for buffo writing. There is a strong vein of original humour pervading this composition, which inspired regret that it was the only song of that class in the opera. Jules is here discovered in a felon’s dress, having been transported to the colony for wounding his superior officer. A vessel is seen in the offing, and lands*

“several sailors, amongst whom is recognised the  
“devoted *Maid of Artois*, who, disguised as one  
“of them, had made the voyage in order to free her  
“lover. *Jules* is not slow in identifying *Isoline*, and  
“they in turn are watched by a friendly negress,  
“*Ninka*, who is resolved to assist them in their  
“schemes of flight. These events pass in admirable  
“concerted music, but we would recommend the bell  
“which chimes the cessation of labour to be in the  
“key-note of the singers, and it will then produce a  
“pleasing effect. The duet, trio, quartet, and quin-  
“tet, which follow between *Isoline*, *Jules*, *Martin*,  
“*Synnelet*, and *Ninka*, describe a vivid scene of in-  
“terest, and display much thought and feeling.

“The whole piece is highly dramatic. It opens  
“with the rejoicings of *Jules* and *Isoline* at their  
“meeting, and is then joined by *Martin*, who is turn-  
“key, and whom *Isoline* (who has assumed the dress  
“of a sister of charity) bribes to permit the interview.  
“*Ninka* announces the approach of *Synnelet*, and on  
“the arrival of the latter, *Jules* conceals himself.  
“The former is struck with the beauty of *Isoline*, and  
“is about to lay rude hands on her, when *Jules*  
“rushes in, and, being armed with a musket, consigns  
“the overseer to his own dungeon, while he escapes  
“with *Isoline* by a secret path leading to the deserts.  
“A ship of war then arrives, bringing the new gover-  
“nor, who turns out to be the *Marquis*, recovered  
“from his wounds. Phillips sings a ballad, ‘The  
“‘light of other days is faded,’ which is the most

“elegant and graceful piece of music in the opera. It was rapturously encored with many symptoms of a desire for a third time. It is replete with sensibility and genius, and reflects the highest credit on Balfe’s invention and fancy. The melody steals upon the senses like a dream of early days. The feelings are imperceptibly aroused, as well as the imagination excited. It is full of melancholy tenderness, and the conviction of the natural and beautiful is at once impressed. Phillips executed this exquisite air *con amore*, and with appropriate simplicity of expression and passionate tenderness. The accompaniments merit the highest eulogium. A delicious obligato on the cornet or key-trumpet was played, we believe by Handley, and was richly entitled to the warm plaudits bestowed upon it. His tone and intonation were faultless. In the second movement, the harp is heard with a soft sweep. Altogether, it is quite a *bijou*, and if there was not a note of music worth hearing in the whole opera, this charming melody would be sufficient to stamp the fame of the composer. The finale of the second act was somewhat complicated, but the combination not ineffective.

“The last act is taken up with a most elaborately painted scene of the deserts of Guiana upon a very extensive scale. The lurid horizon, the dreary and remote waste, and the varied aspect of the glowing sands, were all in splendour, and imparted a solemn feeling to

*“ the acting, if acting it can be called, of MALIBRAN.  
“ Great and unexampled as her histrionic powers  
“ have hitherto been justly considered, we question  
“ whether any idea of the extent of her talents  
“ could come up to the fearfulness and appalling  
“ fidelity of her acting in this scene of solitude and  
“ desolation. JULES, the lover, wounded by the sen-  
“ tinel in his flight, is seen reclining on the ground  
“ in a state of insensibility ; ISOLINE watching every  
“ returning sign of animation, giving to him the last  
“ drop of water to bathe his wound, and then burst-  
“ ing forth into a paroxysm of exultation that*

*‘ The light is in his eye again, the beating at his heart.’*

*“ It is at the peril of her own life, however, she has  
“ saved her lover—the parched thirst, the plague of  
“ the desert, is upon her. One drop of water would  
“ save her. JULES extends the flask—alas ! its con-  
“ tents had been emptied for him. Madness is upon  
“ her, and yet is she conscious that the man for  
“ whom she has sacrificed herself, is hanging over  
“ her. She only desires to clasp his hand—she  
“ breathes only for him—and as nature sinks within  
“ her, her last prayer is for him alone, whom in life  
“ she had lived for. She faints : but the MAID OF AR-  
“ TOIS is not destined thus to perish. Her constancy  
“ is to be rewarded. A military march is heard, suc-  
“ cour arrives, and the Marquis, who is on his way to  
“ Cayenne over the deserts, enters, accompanied by*

" a numerous suite. *Isoline* recovers her consciousness, she is relieved; and the reproaches of *Jules*, on recognising in the governor his former persecutor, are changed into blessings when the latter avows his faults, and amends them by bestowing a free pardon on his rival. The opera thus terminates happily.

" *It would be useless for us to enter at any length into the matchless display of MALIBRAN! Every lover of music and of the drama will unquestionably behold her in the MAID OF ARTOIS. We cannot say she reserved herself for the end, for she was transcendently grand throughout; but she gave the finale, 'The rapture dwelling,' with inexhaustible fire and energy, and the FUREUR of the audience was at its height. Three octaves did MALIBRAN call into requisition in this masterpiece of execution, reaching E in alt, and making a prolonged shake, if we mistake not, on B flat in alt. It was, in sooth, a wondrous burst, and it was cruel to demand it a second time. The curtain however drew up, and she again went through what would on the score appear an almost incredible task. A storm of cheering summoned her, after the act-drop fell, and Templeton led her forward, when the waving of hats, handkerchiefs, &c. could not be exceeded even at Lascala."*

If to have been the humble medium of introducing to the public an entertainment of so delightful a



nature, of bringing before them, in all the splendour of her unrivalled powers, such an extraordinary creature as this artiste, be the proudest and the brightest recollection of far departed years of memory, during a long theatrical career, the knowledge that the *Maid of Artois* was the *first* and unhappily the *last* original character portrayed by the enchantress on this stage, and the last character she performed on *any* stage, presents a sorrowful contrast. Every chord of the heart vibrates, by any recurrence to the slightest associations of this charming actress with the character in which she so fascinated her beholders.

It may be, therefore, an acceptable diversion from the painful details which we shall have to enter upon, to record a humorous incident which led to the thrilling, the more than brilliant, the not to be forgotten execution, by Madame Malibran, of the finale to this opera. I had occasion, during its last rehearsal but one, to express myself in strong terms at her leaving the stage for more than an hour and a half, to go and gain 25*l.* at a morning concert. Neither the concerted pieces of music, nor the situations of the drama in which she was involved, could possibly be proceeded with, and the great stake we were then contending for was likely to be placed in jeopardy by an unworthy grasp at a few pounds, to the prejudice of a theatre paying her nightly five times as much. She knew she had done wrong, and she atoned for it by her genius, while her pride would not have permitted her to do so. She had borne along

the two first acts on the first night of performance in such a flood of triumph, that she was bent, by some almost superhuman effort, to continue its glory to the final fall of the curtain. I went into her dressing-room previous to the commencement of the third act, to ask how she felt, and she replied, "Very tired, but" (and here her eye of fire suddenly lighted up) "you angry devil, if you will contrive to get me a pint of porter in the desert scene, you shall have an encore to your finale." Had I been dealing with any other performer, I should perhaps have hesitated in complying with a request that might have been dangerous in its application at the moment; but to check *her* powers was to annihilate them. I therefore arranged that, behind the pile of drifted sand on which she falls in a state of exhaustion, towards the close of the desert scene, a small aperture should be made in the stage; and it is a fact that, from underneath the stage through that aperture, a pewter pint of porter was conveyed to the parched lips of this rare child of song, which so revived her, after the terrible exertion the scene led to, that she electrified the audience, and had strength to repeat the charm, with the finale to the *Maid of Artois*. The novelty of the circumstance so tickled her fancy, and the draught itself was so extremely refreshing, that it was arranged, during the subsequent run of the opera, for the negro slave, at the head of the governor's procession, to have in the gourd suspended to his neck

the same quantity of the same beverage, to be applied to her lips, on his first beholding the apparently dying *Isoline*.

The statement, in the preceding chapter, of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, in his defence of the assault action, viz. "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative, " Mr. Macready, were to be shelved, that the songs " of the *Maid of Artois* should be given to the public," is such an amusing piece of nonsense, and so utterly at variance with the fact, that it will be as well to set the learned Serjeant to rights by figures. "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative" (as Talfourd skittishly dubs Macready) were exhibited at various parts of this season, TWENTY-FOUR NIGHTS out of the THIRTY-EIGHT which the said "representative" played in Drury Lane, and the following were the receipts to the said precious exhibitions:—

1835.		£	s.	d.
October 1st.	Macbeth ( <i>opening of the theatre</i> )	-	360	15 0
" 3d.	As you Like it	-	118	8 0
" 5th.	Macbeth	-	301	4 6
" 7th.	Hamlet	-	185	14 0
" 8th.	Henry IV.	-	175	3 0
" 10th.	Winter's Tale	-	176	5 0
" 12th.	Macbeth ( <i>Her Majesty's visit</i> )	-	444	12 0
" 16th.	Hamlet	-	249	8 0
" 19th.	Macbeth	-	249	11 6
" 21st.	Othello	-	188	6 0
" 22d.	Hamlet	-	99	6 0
" 23d.	Othello	-	162	6 0
" 26th.	Macbeth	-	129	15 0
" 28th.	Othello	-	194	5 0

1836.

Feb.	3d.	Othello ( <i>after a secession of 14 weeks !</i> )	181	1	0
„	8th.	Ditto - - -	206	4	6
„	15th.	Ditto - - -	187	0	0
„	29th.	Ditto - - -	150	4	6
March	1st.	Macbeth - - -	171	6	6
April	14th.	Ditto - - -	130	9	0
„	19th.	King John - - -	127	3	6
„	26th.	Henry IV. - - -	109	18	6
„	27th.	Macbeth - - -	150	0	0
„	29th.	Richard III. - - -	93	16	6
Total - - -			£4,542	3	0

This sum of four thousand five hundred and forty-two pounds, if divided by twenty-four, (the number of nights the “representative” played “Shakspeare,”) will give a nightly average of £189!—and this, too, backed by the advantageous opening of the season, a powerful company in the cast of pieces, new farces, popular after-pieces, a visit from her Majesty, &c. &c.,—circumstances that mainly contributed to augment the receipts of some of the houses the “representative” played before. Opposed to this, let us see what kind of receipts the *Maid of Artois* and her “representative,” Madame Malibran, attracted:

1836.

			£	s.	d.
May	27th.	Maid of Artois ( <i>its night of production</i> ) -	379	10	6
„	30th.	Ditto - - -	384	1	0
June	1st.	Ditto - - -	372	1	6
„	3d.	Ditto - - -	376	14	0
„	6th.	Ditto - - -	363	15	6

June	8th.	Maid of Artois	-	-	-	340	2	6
"	10th.	Ditto	-	-	-	338	19	6
"	13th.	Ditto	-	-	-	322	3	0
"	15th.	Ditto	-	-	-	361	8	0
"	17th.	Ditto	-	-	-	295	6	6
"	20th.	Ditto	-	-	-	322	7	6
"	22d.	Ditto	-	-	-	355	9	0
"	24th.	Ditto	-	-	-	373	14	0
"	27th.	Ditto	-	-	-	334	2	6
"	29th.	Ditto	-	-	-	292	3	6
July	1st.	Ditto	-	-	-	478	12	6
						<hr/>		
Total						-	£5,690	11 0

This sum total of FIVE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY POUNDS, if divided by SIXTEEN, (the number of nights Madame Malibran played the *Maid of Artois* in succession,) will yield a nightly average of more than £355!—and this too, having to combat against the state of the season, the heat of the weather, races, morning concerts, the Italian opera, &c. Suppose, therefore, just for the amusement of Mr. Thessiger's "learned friend" Serjeant Talfourd, we strike the balance, and see how the case stands:—

Sixteen successive nights of <i>The Maid of Artois</i> and her				
"representative," Madame Malibran, despite every				
possible drawback, produced a nightly average of	-	355	0	0
Twenty-four nights of "Shakspeare and his representa-				
tive, "Mr. Macready," with every possible advantage				
to back him, produced a nightly average of	-	-	189	0 0
Difference per night !	-	£166	0	0

The learned Serjeant will thus be able to see at a single glance THE REASON why "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative, Mr. Macready," were not in such requisition at Drury Lane Theatre as he conceived, or at least stated, they ought to have been. For fear any thick-headed partisan of the "representative" should think me so irredeemably sunk in the slough of conceit, as to imagine my authorship at all contributed to this extraordinary attraction, it is as well to state, that my sole object is to show him, and all such silly advocates, that a trifling work in the hands of a great *artiste* is calculated to make a deeper impression on the public than the works even of our sublime poet in the hands of a secondary one. If Mr. Macready *had* been "the representative of Shakspeare," as set forth by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, the people would have flocked to see him ; but that not being the case, they begged leave to keep away. As, however, the learned Serjeant was so severe upon the *Maid of Artois*, and my supposed vanity in bringing it forward, I will show him, by a general reference to the receipts of Madame Malibran's different performances, what very substantial reasons I had for acting as I did :

	£	s.	d.
The nightly average receipt of sixteen performances of			
<i>La Sonnambula</i> in 1835 was	-	-	- 311 0 0
The nightly average receipt of ten representations of			
<i>Fidelio</i> was in 1835	-	-	- 330 0 0
The nightly average receipt of nine performances of <i>La</i>			
<i>Sonnambula</i> in 1836 was	-	-	- 333 0 0

The nightly average receipt of four representations of  
*Fidelio* in 1836 was - - - - 317 0 0

THE NIGHTLY AVERAGE RECEIPT OF SIXTEEN REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MAID OF ARTOIS IN 1836 WAS - 355 0 0

The "representative of Shakspeare" had better peruse this document very attentively, and "then to breakfast with what appetite he may." The minuteness of these figures can be referred to by any one who may imagine that, for the sake of a joke, facts have been perverted, by an inspection of the books of the theatre, in the possession of Mr. Whitmore, official assignee, No. 2, Basinghall Street, whose urbanity of manners will undoubtedly accommodate any inquirer. We will not talk about the triumph of "RIGHT" and "STRENGTH;" but if the lips of the songstress were not mute, she might well exclaim that, at all events, it was the triumph of "GENIUS."

The termination of the Drury Lane season,\* and

\* On the evening which ended Malibran's first engagement, and was supposed by the public to end the season, Cooper, of whom she used to say, "*c'est un hôtel garni, dont l'appartement le plus élevé est ordinairement le plus mal meublé,*" had been deputed to put together one of the usual speeches on such occasions, and came into my room to rehearse it. When he had so done, I told him, instead of delivering that, to go before the audience and thus address them:—"Ladies and Gentlemen, I put it to you whether I am not an extremely ill-used person; (here the whole house thought he had been half murdered, or something like it;) I had prepared what I considered a very fine speech, when Mr. Bunn exclaimed, "Don't give them any of that rubbish, but tell them what they would much rather hear, that I have engaged Malibran for eight nights more.'" The people roared with delight, but Cooper certainly personified the *hôtel garni*!

the termination with it of my lease of the theatre, led to its being advertised to be let; and as the circumstances attending it were so peculiar, it is as well to insert a copy of the identical advertisement:

“Theatre Royal Drury Lane, June 23, 1836. The existing lease of this theatre will terminate at the close of the present season; the committee therefore deem it expedient, under the Act of Parliament, to give notice, that they will be ready to receive proposals by sealed tenders, from such persons as may be desirous of renting the above theatre for a term of years, to commence from, and possession to be given on, the 21st day of July next, on conditions which may be seen by application to the secretary at the committee room of the theatre, between the hours of 12 and 2 o'clock daily, on and after Thursday the 30th instant; such tenders to be addressed to the secretary of the committee, and to be delivered on or before the 7th day of July next, at one o'clock.

“W. DUNN, *Sec.*

“The sub-committee, in offering the Theatre Royal Drury Lane to public competition, cannot omit availing themselves of this opportunity to bear testimony to the strict faith kept by the present lessee, Mr. Bunn, in his engagements with the committee, as well as their full conviction of his having, under difficult circumstances, sustained the character and respectability of this establishment as a patent theatre.”



It seems a strange state of things that (unless the tenant whose occupancy was then expiring was unwilling to renew his lease) an Act of Parliament should compel a public body to seek a new tenant, when by their own showing they were particularly well satisfied with the one they had. It is that said Act of Parliament which will, unless repealed, eventually cause the downfall of this magnificent property.

When a theatre is thrown into the market, it necessarily implies that the tenant has failed, and been ejected, or else that he has voluntarily seceded; and in either case it speaks against the value of the thing: if it *has* failed, people, otherwise willing, are likely to run away from it; and if the late occupier has seceded, it is evident he did so because he thought it *would* fail. The theatre up to this period was leased to me at a rental of £8,000 per annum, and as the advertisement of the committee states, with perfect truth, that I kept strict faith with them, it does seem a positive absurdity that they should be compelled by Act of Parliament to seek some other person; and when the issue is known, it will turn out to be still much more absurd. Experience had told me I could not continue such a rent as had been paid; and I had given the committee to understand, that if I became their lessee again, it must be on very reduced terms. But if I had offered them an *increase*, they were compelled by Act of Parliament to seek out a new man, or at least to

afford the chance of one presenting himself, even if he offered a positive *decrease*. So much for legislation! The publicity given by such means to the affairs of this theatre is more fatal to its interests than can possibly be supposed. A droll anomaly this, when an Act of Parliament compels a select body of proprietors publicly to proclaim the annual state of their affairs, for the information of the general body, while by such proclamation the *exposé* is ruinous to the present and future prospects of the undertaking.

The result of all this advertising ended in no other eligible tenant presenting himself, and the theatre was re-leased to me at a diminution in the rent of £2,000 per annum.\* The sub-committee, in all this business, could not act in any other way; and it is from year to year a matter of astonishment how they can steer their course at all, bound as they are, on the north by the ground landlord, on the south by the bond-holders, on the east by the new renters, and on the west by the general body of proprietors, with no other compass to guide them than a disgraceful Act

\* The theatre has been let to my successor for £5,000 per annum, and, long before the usual season shall expire, it will be to be let for less, or I am a false prophet. The day on which I make this memorandum, I met the present lessee of Drury Lane, Mr. Hammond, early in the morning, on my way into the city; and, after the interchange of a few remarks, I said, "If you don't look much sharper after matters than you do, you'll go where I am going." "Where may that be?" said he. "To the Court of Bankruptcy," said I. And we parted—he in doubt, and I in certainty. His place is in a *sloop*, not on the quarter-deck of a SEVENTY-FOUR.

of Parliament. They are entitled to a much greater degree of courtesy than they receive from some of their constituency; and, while I am free to admit that during a very long connexion with them, I have invariably met with the utmost attention and a cordial co-operation with my views, I can conscientiously aver that I have not known, nor heard of, one measure adopted by them towards others, as well as myself, which, according to their restricted means, was not based upon sound judgment, great consideration, and the utmost liberality.\* The party creating the

\* I never knew but one instance in which the slightest indication of ill feeling was manifested, and then it was richly deserved. Towards the end of the season 1823—24, we had missed poor Elliston for a full fortnight, and even his family were ignorant of his retreat. Having reason to believe that West, his confidential messenger, knew where he was, I threatened to shoot him if he didn't tell me; and partly in fear of his master, and partly in fear of me, he did "a tale unfold." I then apprized Elliston, who had been all the while in the vicinity of the theatre, of the embarrassments we were in, and of the uneasiness of the committee,—requesting his immediate presence. He came to the theatre in the evening, not intoxicated from the effects of what he had just been drinking, but soddened and pulpy "from the remains of last night." He had been unnecessarily rude to Braham, had suffered the indignity of Dowton spitting in his face, and had been "coarse of speech" to some ladies in the green-room, when he joined Mr. Dunn and myself at the council table. We had not been seated five minutes, when Mr. Calcraft, M.P., the chairman of the committee, having heard of these things, entered the room, and thus addressed Elliston: "I have found you at last, where I have for some time been wishing to find you—with your officers. You have ill used your actors, and insulted your actresses; and if you don't pay your deposit to the committee on the 5th of July, by G—d, sir, you shall not be their lessee on the sixth"—and out he bounced, slamming the door after him. Elliston rose with great dignity, and displaying a

greatest difficulty in the internal management of their affairs is that of the NEW RENTERS, who, be it remembered, never paid one shilling towards the erection of the present theatre. They were handed over to the proprietors as heir-looms upon the patent, and the smoking ruins of the old building; and Mr. Whitbread placed them in the situation of principal claimants on the new building (taking precedence even of the builders) by Act of Parliament. The main article they contributed to the present property, viz. THE PATENT, being now worth very little more than the parchment it is engrossed upon, ought to set aside their claim altogether, or at least to lead to its being merged in the general valuation of the concern; but as long as they fight for the largest portion of the rent, claim the privilege of selling their admission, or, if not sold, of using it, so long will Drury Lane Theatre be unmanageable.

When the reader is told there are THREE HUN-

large quantity of shirt-frill, taking up the skirts of his coat, and assuming a pompous attitude before the fire, he thus addressed Dunn:

*Elliston.* Don't you think that's personal?

*Dunn.* Hum!

*Elliston, (crossing over to Bunn.)* Don't *you* think that's personal?

*Bunn.* It's a ——— good imitation of it.

*Elliston (to Dunn and Bunn.)* Then don't you think you're a couple of pretty fellows to allow your master to be insulted in this manner? I'll (and here he buttoned up his coat and put on his hat,) I'll kick his parliamentary———. He ran out of the room, and the next time I heard of him, he was alarmingly ill, and confined to his bed, in Stratford Place.

DRED of these shares, each entitled to a nightly free admission to the theatre, to say nothing of the admissions of the proprietors and numerous other parties, he will be tempted to ask where accommodation is to be found for that portion of the public who should have, by accident, any inclination to pay for their admission? Considering that those who go into a theatre invariably prefer, and as far as able, take possession of the best places, it would really be a difficult thing to answer such a question. I am afraid that time will teach all parties concerned a very stern answer.

Previous to my entering upon a fresh lease of Drury Lane Theatre, I was honoured with the invitation of a party of noblemen and gentlemen to a splendid dinner at the Piazza ; and to make the compliment as agreeable and courteous as possible, the invitation was extended to twenty-five of my friends, more immediately connected with me theatrically, the selection of whom they were pleased to leave to their "chief guest." The direct object of this attention was to mark, in the strongest manner, their sense of the late disgraceful assault to which I had been subject ; and at the same time to record the favourable opinion they were pleased to entertain of so humble an individual, who may boast of having the honour to retain that opinion up to the present moment. It is not necessary to go further into the details of such a ceremonial, than to submit a copy of the "return" made to the usual proposal of one's health, which is

introduced, only because it bears upon the theatrical subjects that I have previously submitted in part to the reader's perusal :

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“ The honour which has been conferred upon me  
“ by the proposition of the noble chairman, and confirmed by the response of yourselves, is one that,  
“ under any circumstances, would be highly flattering, but on the present occasion is a compliment  
“ of singular gratification.

“ I have been invited, together with a large party  
“ of my immediate friends, to partake the hospitality  
“ of a body of noblemen and gentlemen moving in  
“ the highest society of this country, and distinguished in such society by talents and attainments  
“ that render them some of its brightest ornaments.  
“ I have for many years past been honoured by such  
“ attentions in their own private circles ; but, while  
“ I hope not to be thought unmindful of, or ungrateful for, those distinguished and delightful recollections, I may, perhaps, be allowed to class this  
“ last amongst the greatest of the favours they have  
“ so bountifully heaped upon me.

“ I will not make so ungenerous a return for this  
“ signal compliment, as to abstract your attention by  
“ any recital of my own situation ; but I may be,  
“ perhaps, permitted to offer a few remarks on what  
“ may be considered to have led to it.

“The principal charge that has been levelled  
“against my management of the London stage is,  
“that I have sacrificed what some suppose to be the  
“legitimate drama, and particularly abused it in the  
“person of one whom some suppose to be a legiti-  
“mate actor. The charge is as unfounded as it is  
“ridiculous.

“With the death of the great ornaments of the  
“stage, who at one period upheld its legitimate  
“purposes, a general taste for that legitimacy alto-  
“gether passed away; and it is not in the power of  
“any *pseudo* successor, if he were aided by every  
“manager in existence, at present, to revive it. The  
“aspect of the times has likewise presented too tur-  
“bulent and stormy an appearance to induce people  
“to seek even a mimic representation of them within  
“the walls of a theatre, whereto the world resorts to  
“be relieved of its sorrows, rather than to be re-  
“minded of them.

“But if, in the rapid strides which genius is for  
“ever making over the world, she has trampled down  
“the aspirations of one branch of the histrionic art,  
“it has only been to impart the glory of her flight to  
“another; and that other I have endeavoured to  
“cultivate with, I hope, an industry commensurate  
“with the public pleasure. The fascinations of  
“music—in itself a second language—have so twined  
“themselves round the imaginations and feelings of  
“the community at large, that he to whose lot it

“ falls to cater for the taste of that community, must  
“ necessarily best consult it in following the general  
“ bias.

“ In my desire to do so, it may not be vanity to  
“ assert that I have brought forward the germs of  
“ much native talent, which, by public favour, have  
“ eventually opened into bloom ; and placing them  
“ side by side the transplanted exotics of other lands,  
“ the bouquet has become an assemblage of rarest  
“ fragrance and verdure. There are samples of each  
“ in the room.

“ The season just brought to a close has produced  
“ a greater receipt than many in the palmiest days  
“ of the English stage, and is without any prece-  
“ dent, in its present alleged degeneration. It has  
“ amounted to no less a sum than 60,000*l.*; and if,  
“ in my desire to uphold the character of an art  
“ assailed in every direction by its own professors,  
“ I have not derived from such receipt the honour-  
“ able profit which anxiety and zeal may be con-  
“ sidered entitled to, I should be most ungrateful,  
“ indeed, if I did not feel that I have gained the  
“ good opinion and wishes of a host of friends, whose  
“ compliment of to-day will for ever

“ Linger haunting the greenest spot

“ Of memory's waste.”

Well, reader, I think we have had, taken altogether, a very busy season—this said one of 1835-36—and a season more replete than most others in my remembrance with the vicissitudes of theatrical life



—more memorable also for its striking events. The success of *The Jewess* was one that will not occur, and certainly *has* not occurred, in a quarter of a century. The assault of Mr. Macready was, beyond any dispute, a *striking* event ; and the last performance on the London stage, and the stage of life as well, of Madame Malibran was another. These occurrences were “interlarded” with a considerable degree of fun, one sample of which cannot fail to divert the reader. Mr. Braham had engaged the Bedouin Arabs to perform in the Colosseum at a considerable expense ; and Mr. Ducrow having announced a similar kind of entertainment by a larger number of artists, an application was made at Bow Street, on behalf of the former, for a warrant to stop the proceedings of the latter ; upon which Ducrow issued the following bill:—

“Extraordinary Equestrian and Gymnastic Arab  
“Feats! surpasses anything of the kind ever pro-  
“duced. The public are respectfully informed that  
“these are not the four black men who play without  
“their shoes and stockings at the west end of the  
“town, but upwards of forty British artists, that  
“challenge all Europe for talent, variety, extraor-  
“dinary feats of manly skill and activity, and who  
“nightly receive thunders of applause from crowded  
“audiences, and do not play to a dozen of daily  
“loungers. The union of talent and Arab spec-  
“tacles of this establishment does not confine itself  
“to the tumbling of four great ugly blacks, who

“ have been refused an engagement at Astley's, because there are so many superior and more extraordinary men of our own country nearly starving, and compelled to perform on an open race-course for a penny, whilst those four men can get one hundred pounds per week, because they are black, and foreigners.

“ The reader no doubt has witnessed boys running alongside of a coach, doing what is termed CAT-IN-WHEEL, and turning foresprings with one hand and then the other; or throwing summersets from a sand-bank. Such is the grand performances of these Sauteurs, consisting of three or four blacks, who walk on their hands, with their

“ NAKED FEET IN THE AIR, LIKE TWO BLACK FRYING-PANS,

“ (of course no lady or respectable person can sit and see this.)

“ These blacks, with the man who takes half their money, applied at Bow Street to ask if they could not prevent Astley's from using the word ‘ Arab Exercises,’ for that the public went every night and filled Astley's, and never came to see them at all! Why, of course, the public are the best judges, and know the difference between seeing a spectacle in character, produced with splendour, to introduce the talents of the flying man, the equilibrists, elastic tumblers, the antipodeans, jugglers, dancers, men and horses, tableaux, the groups of trained horses, and other novelties!

“ But come, see, and judge for yourselves; for this  
“ is only a small part of Astley’s entertainments.”

I should like to know who could resist such an appeal as this. Thousands *did* “ go and judge for  
“ themselves,” and laughed at the play-bill, more than, probably, at any of the performances they had seen in their lives. If any one comedian of the day possessed half the humour there is in Ducrow, he would make a splendid fortune, without working half as hard for it as he does.

## CHAPTER IV.

The manager's last sight of the actress—*Kean, ou Désordre et Génie*, exemplified in the actor and the dramatist—Kean's sugar and water, *without* brandy—Taglioni and Malibran, "the two stars in one sphere"—6,000*l.* too much to pay for enthusiasm—One of Beazley's many jokes—A supper at Brompton, and a breakfast in the morning—Malibran's death—Funeral—Mourners at it—The Moseley arms and the coffin—De Beriot—Dr. Belluomini—Lablache—De Beriot's grief, and his sister's letter—Report of the Festival Committee—The Duchess of St. Alban's—Malibran's correspondence—Melancholy engagement for a small sum—Demand for an unusually large one—The fall of beauty and talent.

DURING a short visit I paid to Paris, during the recess, in company with mine excellent friend, Mr. Beazley, (under whose surveillance Drury Lane Theatre was to be redecorated, beautified, cleansed, altered, relighted, &c. &c., by the first day of the ensuing October, I saw Madame Malibran for the last time, *ALIVE*, in the *Variétés* Theatre, on Wednesday, August 31, to which place all the playgoers of this metropolis, who could gain admission at any price, were attracted, to witness the first representation of a drama, entitled *Kean, ou Désordre et*

*Génie*, founded, or purporting to be founded, on the biography of our celebrated tragedian. The drama was from the pen of Alexander Dumas, who sat in becoming state in the dress boxes, to listen to the plaudits bestowed upon as worthless a composition as ever was put upon a stage. The tendency to exaggeration, which characterises our lively neighbours in most respects, is remarkably apparent in their dramatic labours. They seek for effect, even at the expense of truth, and in utter defiance of all probability. An historical subject, taken up by one of their ablest dramatists, is handled in the same fashion—although they have access to *Bibliothèques* in abundance, where such glaring inaccuracies might be corrected. If, therefore, they trifle with matters of fact, in connexion with national narrative, it is less to be wondered at that they do not consult them in cases of a purely individual nature. Monsieur Dumas' drama of *Kean* is the completest hodge-podge that ever was compiled. He lays the scene of the tragedian's glory at Covent Garden, instead of Drury Lane, represents him as a perfect RICHELIEU in the *beau monde*, exhibits him as disputing the heart of the Countess Kefeld, lady of the Danish ambassador, with no less a personage than the Prince of Wales, (characterised as his intimate friend,) who, for interfering with his Royal Highness's pleasurable pursuits, banishes him to America for one year, whither he carries off the richest English heiress, yclept Miss Anna Danby; while, in some interme-

diat scenes, Kean is represented as challenging Lord Melville to mortal combat in a public-house—as consenting to play FALSTAFF for a brother actor's benefit—as addressing the audience after the fashion in which the king addresses his parliament, "My lords and gentlemen;" and, to crown all, Kean's servant brings him a glass of *eau sucré*.

Without analysing this mass of supreme nonsense, it will be quite sufficient to direct the reader's attention to the last inaccuracy. It is no secret, and never has been one, that poor Kean respected "a bumper of good liquor" as much as any subject in his Majesty's dominions; and as such, I think the chances are, that if his servant had brought him a simple glass of *eau sucré*, without adding thereto a considerable quantity of *eau de vie*, Kean would have broken every bone in the varlet's body. If Monsieur Dumas is no better informed upon the commonest usages and every-day customs of English society than his drama of KEAN declares him to be, he ought to be ashamed to write thereon until he had enlightened his understanding; and if he *is* informed, and has misapplied his information, he ought to be so much the more ashamed. I felt particularly disposed to say of this drama and its author something like what Lord William Lennox said during his canvass at Lynn, to a grocer in that town. Instead of satisfying themselves with a simple refusal of their vote to the noble lord, both father and son began to bully his lordship, who, turning round to the old

man, said, " Sir, all I can say in reply is, your son is really a very gross person, and you are a *grosser* ;" and out he walked.

One of the principal objects I had in view in coming on this occasion to Paris, was to effect an engagement with Mademoiselle Taglioni, that I might present an attraction comparatively great, on the evenings during Madame Malibran's engagement, fixed to begin the ensuing May, when she did not appear ;—that is, by playing Malibran three nights in the week, and Taglioni the other three, I stood a better chance of remunerating myself than by allowing the value of Malibran's nights of performance to be reduced by the recoil of the " off " nights, (as they are theatrically called,) when I had no attraction to present to the public. Could any star in the whole theatrical hemisphere effect this object excepting Taglioni ? And although it is laid down by the great dramatic bard, that

" Two *stars* keep not their motion in one sphere ;"

yet the poet had not anticipated the creation of two SUCH STARS as Mesdames Malibran and Taglioni, when he penned that noble line. I imbibe every sentiment contained in those charming stanzas addressed to the fair *danseuse*, published with Chalon's Sketches of her, and wish I could find room for more than one of them :

Oh ! art thou come to captivate mankind,  
To steal man's heart,  
To bid him fling all other hopes behind,  
Rend ties apart

That bound him to the world—and bow to thee,  
 Emblem of flowers?  
 To teach us all how happy we must be  
 Who call thee ours !

The only drawback to my enthusiasm on the present occasion was, that I had to pay such an enormous price for indulging in it, being unable to effect an engagement with this “ Spirit of Air” on any other terms than 100*l.* per night for herself, 600*l.* for the term of her visit to her father as ballet-master, 900*l.* to her brother and sister-in-law to dance with her, two benefits guaranteed to produce her 1,000*l.*, and half a benefit guaranteed to produce her brother 200*l.*, involving altogether a sum of more than 6,000*l.* ! My liabilities, therefore, during the following months of May, June, and July, were nearly 10,000*l.* between Madame Malibran, Mademoiselle Taglioni, and her family, exclusive of all the other outgoings of the theatre ; and I feel as certain as I do of my now recording my opinion, that, but for the calamity which befell one of the parties, the speculation would have turned out profitable. No other establishment in the world could have competed with such an array of talent, and any prices in reason might have been obtained to witness its display ; because, after showing them off on separate nights for a few weeks, I should, towards the end of their respective engagements, have played them on the same evening, and, with a certainty of my expectations being realised, have calculated on many audiences literally filling the theatre. But this was not to be.



Exclusive of the prospective engagement of Mademoiselle Taglioni, I concluded one, for immediate purposes, with a lady whom some consider her rival ; and who, by virtue of the means we placed in her hands, made herself as popular in Drury Lane Theatre, as the other was at the Italian Opera House. I allude to Mademoiselle Duvernay, as genuine a specimen of a French dancer, both privately and publicly, as ever sandalled shoe. These and other arrangements having been completed, " I hastened home with joy." One soon sickens of Paris and of Paris people—their perpetual swagger is nauseating, their trade of over-reaching offensive, their flippancy ridiculous. Beazley, who happened to hear one of my tirades on the bluster of "*les braves*," amused and consoled me very much by telling me a story very applicable to their vain boastings. A fellow was vaunting in very grandiloquent style of himself, and levelling the pretensions of every other person with the utmost contempt, when a listener said, " Pray, sir, what may *your* business be ?"—" O," replied the gascon, " I am but a cork-cutter, but then it *is in a very large way*."—" Indeed !" replied the other ; " then I presume you are a *cutter of bungs* !" *Superbe ! magnifique ! pretty well !* is their daily theme from cock-crow to sundown.

My return to London was followed up, within a very few days, by an event almost national as it respected the public pleasure, personally distressing to me on the score of friendship, and seemingly in-

volving my ruin in a theatrical point of view. The death of Madame Malibran stunned me at the first. Three weeks before its occurrence I had seen her, apparently full of health and spirits, in the *Variétés* Theatre, laughing at the incongruities manifest in the drama of *Kean*; and to suppose that the voice which made such music was hushed for ever, was to me the supposition of an impossibility. During her late professional visit to London, I was leaving the theatre one evening, and going into Malibran's room I found her, after the performance of *La Sonnambula*, dressing for an evening concert. I remonstrated with her, pointed out the inroads she was making on her constitution, and urged her to send an excuse. She promised to do so; and in a belief she would keep that promise, I bade her good night, and drove home to Brompton. I was reading in bed about half an hour after the midnight chime, when the bell of the outer gate was rung violently, and on its being answered, I heard a voice say, "Tell Mr. Bunn not to get up—I am only come for a little fresh air in his garden." I dressed, and found in one of the walks Madame Malibran, Monsieur de Beriot, and Monsieur Thalberg, from whom I learnt that, despite all my injunctions, she had been to two concerts, gone home afterwards to undress, and dress, and had taken a fancy to this slight country trip at such an extraordinary hour. I had supper laid under a huge walnut tree which overshadowed the entire southern aspect of the house;

and beneath its umbrage some viands, especially aided by a favourite beverage of hers—home-brewed beer — and (don't start readers !) ONIONS — for, as Swift says,

“ This is every cook's opinion—  
No sav'ry dish *without* an ONION.”

So said she, and proved it too by pulling them fresh from their beds, and, thus humbly entertained, she seemed to be as happy as possible. She warbled, as late as three into the morning, some of her most enchanting strains, and wound up by saying, “ Now I have had my supper, I will go and steal my breakfast ;” and running into the hen-house, emptied every nest, and started off to town. That walnut tree bears, and will bear, unless some Goth shall desecrate the tree, and change its title, the name of the syren who sang beneath it ; and the anecdote is perhaps only worth narrating for the purpose of mentioning that, on the morning of Sunday, September the 25th, 1836, I was seated beneath this very tree when intelligence was brought to me of her death.

Apart from every consideration of friendly intercourse, let the reader imagine the situation of a manager, who had, in consequence of his engagements with her, entered into others equally onerous, and having by such engagements built his main hopes of success on the issue of the season, found them suddenly blasted before even the season began. “ Who

would be a manager?" after this, may very reasonably be exclaimed, and such a visitation ought to operate as an apology for the commission of many an after error of judgment. The principal friend I have had stick to me in other trials—*temper*—did not forsake me in this, and it was necessary to repair the loss as far as possible—as quickly as possible. One of the first duties to perform was to render due honours to the dead.

A work has recently been published, entitled, "Memoirs of Madame Malibran, by the Countess de Merlin, and other intimate friends;" which, as far as regards her engagements with me, and the various circumstances connected therewith, is distinguished by such an extraordinary deviation from fact, that it is imperative upon me to be minute and circumspect to the last degree. It is not my intention to give any biography of Madame Malibran; but it will be expected that one so much mixed up with her, and who became the medium of familiarizing her peerless talent to the English public, should partially dwell on the living and on the dead—give some insight into her character, and a faithful report of her obsequies.

The death of Madame Malibran was an event of no ordinary nature, and it was the least attention her surviving friends could pay, to render their homage over her remains—a duty that became still more important, when it was known that Monsieur de Beriot, her husband, had quitted the scene of

death and desolation at Manchester, departed for Brussels, and left the performance of all funereal ceremonies attendant upon

“ The loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead,”

to the hands of the strangers she died amongst. As one of those friends, I sent a letter to Mr. Willert, brother-in-law to Mr. Beale, of Regent Street, (one of the committee formed at Manchester for the purpose of making the necessary funereal arrangements,) stating my intention of repairing to Manchester to pay the last mark of respect to the deceased. I left London on this mournful expedition (having postponed the opening of Drury Lane theatre for a week) on Thursday, September 29th, and, during my short sojourn in that town, was entertained with the hospitality for which Mr. Willert is distinguished. My first impulse was to enter the chamber of the dead, to which I was admitted by the courtesy of Mrs. Richardson, landlady of the Moseley Arms. In a very small room, lighted by two windows, looking out upon a dull wall, was a bed of narrow dimensions, and rather mean furniture, (green stuff edged with black worsted binding, if I remember rightly,) and in the centre of that bed lay a coffin, covered with common black cloth, on the lid of which, engraved on a brass plate, in the form of a shield, I read these words :

“ MARIA FELICIA DE BERIOT

DIED 23rd SEPT. 1836,

AGED 28 YEARS.”

And is this all, thought I, that now remains of that gifted creature, who, less than three short months since, electrified the ears of all auditors, and charmed the eyes of all beholders, in my own theatrical domain? and whom little more than three short weeks since I saw apparently well and happy, all brilliancy and buoyancy, in a crowded theatre at Paris? And is this dreary chamber, in a busy commercial inn, the place where so much talent and beauty slept the last sleep in, and now lies cold in death? I availed myself of the courtesy manifested by the landlady, (whose conduct throughout was full of heart and honour,) and upon that lone coffin I committed to paper THE MONODY which was delivered the ensuing week on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre.

Early on the following morning, Saturday, October 1st, we assembled at the Moseley Arms, to go through the worldly ceremony of consigning to the bosom of the earth one of the loveliest flowers that ever sprang from it. While we were in the midst of preparation, the Earl of Wilton, a nobleman whose various merits it is unnecessary to eulogise, because none would ever think of detracting from them, arrived from his seat in the neighbourhood; and, with feelings that did honour to his high character, requested permission to bear any part, however humble, in the mournful rites. About half-past nine o'clock, the mourners accompanied the Reverend James Crook, senior priest at the Granby-row Chapel, to the chamber before

alluded to, where the ritual of the Romish church was read by the side of the coffin—a general custom when the deceased, being of the Catholic persuasion, is to be buried in a Protestant place of worship. As soon as this ceremony was concluded, a hearse, drawn by four horses, was brought up to the front door of the hotel, in which the body was then deposited. It was followed by six mourning coaches, each drawn by four horses, which conveyed the mourners in the following order:

*First Coach.*—John Macvicar, Esq. (*the Borough-reeve of Manchester*), CHIEF MOURNER, supported by the Earl of Wilton and Sir George Smart.

*Second Coach.*—Robert Brandt, Esq. (*the Barrister*), Mr. Beale, and Mr. Willert, his son-in-law, (*the two gentlemen deputed by M. de Beriot to give directions for the funeral*), and Mr. Bunn, (*Lessee of Drury-lane Theatre*.)

*Third Coach.*—Mr. William Shore, Mr. Joseph Ewart, Mr. Edmund Wright, and Mr. John Shuttleworth.

*Fourth Coach.*—Mr. Gardner, Mr. David Bellhouse, jun., and Mr. George Whittington, (*Stewards of the Music Festival Committee*.)

*Fifth Coach.*—R. C. Sharp, Esq., George Peel, Esq., F. R. Hodgson, Esq., (*Churchwardens of Manchester*), and Joseph Peel, Esq., (*a Festival Steward*.)

*Sixth Coach.*—Shakspeare Phillips, Esq., Daniel Broadhurst, Esq., and Thomas Potter, Esq., (*all*



*Magistrates of the County*) and J. B. Wanklyn, Esq., (*Treasurer of the Festival Committee.*)

The procession was headed by Mr. Thomas, deputy constable of Manchester, four beadles, mutes, a body of gentlemen of the town, in deep mourning, walking three abreast, and a stout yeoman carrying the state-lid of feathers. The heavens wept enough on the occasion, for the rain fell in torrents all the morning; but, however it damped their apparel, it did not at all damp the ardour of the inhabitants, it having been roughly computed that more than fifty thousand people were congregated between the Moseley Arms and the collegiate church. The funeral service was performed by the Rev. C. D. Wray. As the body lay on the bier in the centre aisle, and Handel's "*Holy, holy,*" was sung as a dirge, from the gallery of the collegiate church, a stirring impulse pervaded the whole crowded community, while a deeper feeling swept across those of more contemplative mind, arising from the reflection that, on the last occasion this sublime composition was heard within its sacred walls, it was breathed by the lips of one now cold and inanimate, amongst those her exquisite tones had so animated but a few days before. I can remember no similar sensation.

It is not my purpose to inquire into the conflicting opinions by which I found the town of Manchester agitated, respecting the immediate cause of her illness, and the more immediate cause of her death. While some asserted that she had never recovered



from a fall, while taking equestrian exercise during her late engagement in London, others maintained that she was improperly bled, others that the introduction of the system of *Homœopathics* by Dr. Beluomini, after her having been treated upon so totally different a principle for several preceding days, was fatal. I have my opinions, based upon the information of men of science, but I keep them to myself; still one thing is quite certain, and to that fact the calamity may in reality be traced, viz., to use the words of Lablache, "*Son grand esprit étoit trop fort pour son petit corps.*" Neither is it my intention to enter upon another circumstance which created almost as great a sensation as the death of the wife — the sudden departure of the husband from the scene of sorrow. One party maintained that, in conformity with the custom of his country, Monsieur de Beriot had very properly quitted so mournful a spot; that his feelings would not admit of his remaining there; that he had important family business at Brussels, and his only hope of survival was in instantly repairing to his sister and child, at *Ixelles*, near that city. Another party, and by far the more popular, maintained, that leaving the body — not yet iced by death — of a wife whom he professed to love so much, and one whose talent the world so idolized, to be interred by strangers almost ignorant of the religion she while living professed, and, with every good intention, still tenacious as to the modes and forms to be adopted, was the act of a cold and

bloodless heart, and that his instant flight to a now widowed home was solely for the purpose of securing to himself every article she died possessed of. Although these conflicting opinions appeared in various journals at the time, and certainly formed the general topic of conversation, it is no part of my task to analyse them, nor is it my intention to state to which side of the argument I incline. As soon after my return to London as I could spare the time, I wrote a letter to Monsieur de Beriot, detailing as delicately as possible the result of my visit to Manchester, and offering, if armed with his authority, to rebut the calumnies in circulation against him.\*

One point upon which the world at large was unanimous, was the disgusting scene of exhuming the body, and transporting it to Lacken. It was neither more nor less than an outrage on the memory of the

\* The following reply to my letter, posted at Brussels, October 14, 1836, is from Monsieur de Beriot's sister :

“ MONSIEUR,

“ Depuis plusieurs jours mon frère a le désir de répondre à votre  
 “ bonne lettre, mais il est encore si douloureusement accablé du mal-  
 “ heur que nous a frappé, et des suites de tout ce qu'il a souffert à Man-  
 “ chester, que la moindre émotion est funeste à sa santé ; j'évite autant  
 “ que possible qu'il les se renouvellerait ; cette ce qui m'engage à vous  
 “ témoigner en son nom, combien il est sensible à votre souvenir, sur-  
 “ tout dans une circonstance où il a tout besoin d'amitié.

“ Je n'ai pas jugé de remettre votre lettre à Charles au moment où  
 “ je l'ai reçue ; il ignorait encore alors les calumnies infâmes répandues  
 “ sur son caractère, sur son cœur ; son âme est trop pure pour qu'il ait  
 “ pu s'en douter ; et dans la situation d'esprit où il se trouvait c'était un  
 “ devoir pour moi, de ne pas l'en instruire, je l'ai amené avec prudence

dead, and a laceration of the feelings of the living. Without, therefore, enlarging upon a discussion that can end in no possible good, it is enough to know, and too much to record, that at twenty minutes to twelve on Friday, September 26, 1836, died, at the Moseley Arms Hotel, Manchester, the greatest vocal genius, in my humble opinion, the world has yet possessed, Madame Malibran. Whenever memory recurs to that distressing period, I can almost fancy I hear, knowing her temperament so well, the choking expression of the dying cygnet, (addressed to her wretched partner,) "*Je m'étouffe, o mon cher ami;*" and at the age of twenty-eight, with, lying in her path, a forest of laurels yet ungathered, and a mine of gold yet undug. Pretty farce this life!

The various rumours afloat at the time created such a lively sympathy on the immediate spot, that the attention of Mr. Rutter, the coroner, was attracted, which led to that gentleman's waiting on the sub-committee appointed to conduct her funeral, to deter-

"d'en connoître une partie, afin qu'il puisse bien juger ses véritables amis. Il est heureux, Monsieur, de vous compter de ce nombre.

"Agréez, Monsieur, l'expression de ma reconnaissance particulière pour l'affection que vous aviez pour ma pauvre sœur chérie, et que vous conservez à mon malheureux frère.

"C. DE FROMEQUIN, née DE BERIOT."

"P. S.—Charles vous réservera le souvenir que vous réclamez.

"Monsieur,

"MONSIEUR BUNN,

"Directeur de Théâtre de Drury Lane, London."

The postscript refers to my request for a ring of trifling value, as a memento of one it were impossible to forget; but neither ring nor answer have I received from Monsieur de Beriot, up to this very hour.

mine the propriety or otherwise of holding a coroner's inquest. Their report of the facts connected with the illness of Madame de Beriot was read to Mr. Rutter, who acted very properly in the discharge of his duty, and, from a consideration of them, it was evident that no grounds whatever existed for taking so decided a step. Having been favoured with a copy of the committee's report, I deem it a document of such peculiar interest, as to justify my giving it a place:

#### REPORT OF THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE.

In consequence of the melancholy decease of Madame Malibran de Beriot, a general meeting of the committee for conducting the late festival was convened on Monday last; the Boroughreeve in the chair.

The meeting was most numerously attended. The deepest sympathy was evinced on the occasion, and one unanimous opinion expressed, that the musical world had, by her death, been deprived of its greatest ornament and pride.

Mr. Beale having stated to the committee that the duty of superintending and conducting the funeral had been committed to him by Monsieur de Beriot, it was the universal feeling of the meeting that the responsibility should be shared by the whole committee, and that the funeral should be conducted in such a manner as, while it avoided all unnecessary parade and ostentation, might bespeak the general

sympathy and regret which were felt for the untimely fate of the departed.

A sub-committee was appointed for the purpose of making arrangements for the funeral, and the Warden and Fellows very liberally offered a resting-place for her remains in the collegiate church.

The committee, participating in the interest which must be felt respecting the close of the life of one so eminent in her profession, connected also as it is with the late festival, which in every circumstance attending it, with this one sad exception, was prosperous and gratifying, felt that they should be discharging their duty by giving to the world an authentic narrative of the facts which occurred during Madame Malibran de Beriot's attendance at the festival. For this purpose the evidence of those most intimately connected with the proceedings has been carefully collected, and the following statement is the result of such inquiry.

Madame Malibran de Beriot arrived in Manchester on Saturday, the 10th of September, after a hurried journey from Brussels. She did not attend either of the rehearsals on Monday, on the ground of indisposition, but she was present at the first performance at the church on Tuesday morning, and soon after her arrival there she had an attack of illness which made it doubtful whether she would be able to sing on that morning. She was strongly pressed by gentlemen of the musical committee to call in medical assistance,

but she declined it ; and as it was thought that her indisposition was of a temporary nature, she proceeded, when she was in some degree recovered, to sing her first song, "Holy, holy." With how much expression she sang that song, those who have heard it will not soon forget.

Her next song, "Deh parlate," she also sang with her accustomed excellence.

Her performances on Tuesday evening were executed with her usual *éclat*, though evident traces of indisposition still remained.

On Wednesday morning she sang the song allotted to her without much apparent exertion or distress, and on that morning the duet "Qual anelante," in which she sang, was repeated, to her great delight. She said, "I wish to sing that again for Clara's sake," Miss Novello being a great favourite with Madame Malibran de Beriot, and acquitting herself highly in that duet.

At the concert on Wednesday evening she appeared well able to sustain her part, though evidently labouring under indisposition ; and when the duet of Mercadante's, sung with Madame Caradori, was received with such rapturous applause, and elicited from the great majority a loud encore, (though some of the more judicious part of the audience thought she had better be spared,) she did not hesitate for a moment, but instantly expressed her readiness to repeat it. The duet, as repeated, was sung by her, as well as by Madame Caradori, with in-

creased exertion, and when in the last triumphant shake she almost electrified the audience, many felt for her what she would not anticipate for herself that she was exerting herself beyond her physical strength. But her high spirit carried her away ; and she evinced her general character when she declared immediately afterwards, that whilst she was on the stage her spirit surmounted all difficulties.

Madame Malibran de Beriot was very soon afterwards observed to be seriously unwell, and then, at the solicitation of the committee, and with the assent of Monsieur de Beriot, medical aid was sought for. Dr. Bardsley, and Mr. Worthington, surgeon, being amongst the audience, were called in by one of the committee, and most zealously tendered their services. She was found to be in a feverish state, and apprehensions were entertained of a premature confinement.

Immediate bleeding was resorted to, to allay the great pain and tenderness occasioned by pressure. The hope of her appearing again that evening was abandoned, and an intimation to that effect was publicly made by one of the committee.

On the Thursday morning the Boroughreeve, Mr. Macvicar, waited on Madame Malibran de Beriot to inquire after her health, and to ascertain whether she would be able to sing on that morning, stating at the same time his wish that she should by no means run any risk to gratify the wishes of the public. She expressed the greatest desire to sing, but was in the

first instance advised against it by Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington, from a fear of the excitement that might be caused by it; but when those gentlemen observed the intense desire she had to complete her engagement, and heard her use this remarkable expression, "I will go, lest people should think it is only a sham;" they (having consulted with Monsieur de Beriot) thought it would be a less evil to give way than excite her by opposition.

Being accommodated with a private carriage, which was kindly offered for her use, and being accompanied by Mr. Worthington and Monsieur de Beriot, she went to the church, but had not been long in the room appropriated to the principal vocalists before she was seized with hysterics.

This rendered her performance impossible, and she was attended back in the same manner; but her mental energies and her high professional ambition still remained, for when she returned from the church, she exclaimed, "Oh! how I wish I *could* have sung, for I never was in finer voice."

A bulletin, under the hands of Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington, was then issued by the committee, stating her inability to appear at the concert of that evening.

With this ceased almost every hope of hearing her again at this festival, but the attention of the committee and of the medical attendants did not cease.

The rumour of Madame Malibran de Beriot's illness brought over two gentlemen from Dublin to



ascertain whether she would be able to keep her engagements there. This intelligence occasioned in her the greatest excitement, but Dr. Bardsley took upon himself to say to them that such an attempt must not be made, as it would endanger her life, and a certificate to that effect was signed by Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington, as well as by Dr. Hull, who was consulted on that occasion.

After this time she became more tranquil. On Saturday night Mr. Worthington slept at the Moseley Arms, at Madame Malibran de Beriot's request, and early the next morning he was called to visit her. She became much better; and the consequences that Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington at first apprehended were no longer feared, and it was hoped on Sunday morning, when these two gentlemen last saw her, that by long quiet and perfect repose she might after some time be restored to health.

On Sunday, Dr. Belluomini, who had long had the confidence of Madame Malibran de Beriot, and had been expressly sent for, arrived, when Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington were informed that their services would be no longer required.

From that period it was hoped that all was going on well, until Friday morning, the 23d instant.

On that day Mr. Willert, Mr. Beale, and Mr. Joseph Ewart, who are all members of the committee, learnt that she was in imminent danger. About ten o'clock on that night, Mr. Beale was sent for, and requested by Monsieur de Beriot to super-

intend the funeral of the unfortunate lady, who was then expected every moment to breathe her last; Mr. Beale requested that some one might be joined with him in the trust, and suggested Mr. Willert, and that he might have written instructions on the subject, to which suggestions Monsieur de Beriot gratefully assented. A paper, signed by Monsieur de Beriot, was, after the death of this lady, given to Mr. Beale, authorising him to superintend the funeral.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock the same night, Mr. Joseph Ewart called at the Moseley Arms, where Madame Malibran de Beriot was staying, with an offer of his house as an asylum for Monsieur de Beriot in the event of his bereavement. This offer was communicated by Mrs. Richardson, of the Moseley Arms (who throughout this melancholy history has behaved with the utmost attention and feeling) to Monsieur de Beriot, who was highly gratified by it, and inclined to accept of it. His medical friend, however, Dr. Belluomini, most strongly resisted it, saying that his life would be endangered if he remained in the town. Mr. Ewart was a witness to the last sad scene of Madame Malibran de Beriot's sufferings, about twenty minutes before twelve; and some time after he saw Dr. Belluomini depart in a coach and pair, taking with him Monsieur de Beriot, who appeared in a state of extreme distress.

The committee think it right to notice a rumour that has been spread in some quarters, that the death

of Madame Malibran de Beriot was occasioned by improper treatment, and to state that no information or evidence was given to them that could lead to such a conclusion. The committee disclaim the notion of being considered as a judicial court of inquiry ; but if, in their investigations, they had been convinced that there was ground for such a charge, they should have thought it their duty to have had the charge legally inquired into. It appears, indeed, that Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington, before they took their final leave on Sunday the 18th of September, communicated to Dr. Belluomini the manner in which they had treated their patient, and that Dr. Belluomini intimated to them that his system (of homœopathics) being totally opposed to theirs, he could not derive any benefit from a consultation with them ; and that Madame Malibran de Beriot herself had full confidence in his mode of treatment. On the merits of this system the committee do not give any opinion ; but it is important to state, that no information has been given to show to what extent it has been adopted in the present instance ; and in the judgment of Mr. Lewis, who has made his statement to the committee, the death of the deceased was the result of a nervous fever, under circumstances perfectly natural, and without the slightest ground of suspicion. The committee also think themselves bound to state, that from the testimony of Mrs. Richardson, as well as of Mr. Lewis, the conduct of Dr. Belluomini was attentive and careful as that of

the most zealous physician, and kind and affectionate as that of an intimate and long attached friend.

The committee, in closing this narrative, whilst they bear testimony to the uncommon talents of the deceased lady, and to her most ardent wishes to have exerted them to the very utmost for the benefit of the festival, think they shall receive the acknowledgments of the public for never having in one instance unduly pressed her to perform the part assigned to her; believing, that when there was the ready will, and even beyond her power, the public would agree with them, that it was their duty rather to spare than to urge her on. They have thought it due both to the public and to themselves, to put forth to the world this plain statement of facts, in order to correct any erroneous reports which may obtain currency on a question so interesting to the community; and to show that every step had been taken by the committee which admiration of the talents and commiseration for the misfortune of Madame Malibran de Beriot could dictate.

On behalf of the committee,

JOHN MACVICAR,

*Chairman.*

And now, after this sad recital, who is to give even an outline of the biography of Malibran? The monstrous incongruities recently published in the

name of the Countess de Merlin are a libel upon her. At page 177 of the first volume of these Memoirs it is stated, that "she was first engaged at "Drury Lane, *for the season*, at the rate of £150 "per night, and that to obtain a place in the "theatre on the nights of her performance was regarded as a prize." Instead of this, her first engagement was not for the season, but for fifteen nights in the month of May, for which she received £2,000; and when I pointed out to her the further impossibility of giving such terms, she signed an engagement for the month of June of £1,000, and threw me into a fit of laughter, on saying to me emphatically, and with tears of mortified pride, "For "God's sake, do not say to any one that I accepted "such a sum!"—and as to "obtaining a place being "regarded as a prize," it is an indisputable fact that, during the whole of this her first period of performance on the London stage, she played to, comparatively speaking, empty benches. At page 230 of the first volume it is said, "She again visited London, "where she had concluded an engagement with "Bunn (the manager of Drury Lane) to perform "thirty nights, between the 1st of May and the 30th "July: for these performances she was to receive "£3,775. She played in the *Sonnambula*, in *Fidelio*, and in the *Devil's Bridge*." THE FACT IS, she was engaged by me for Covent Garden! for nineteen performances!—between the 18th of May, and the 1st of July, for £2,375! and she did not play in

the *Devil's Bridge*! At page 245 of the first volume it is stated, "She was married to De Beriot on the 20th of March;" and at page 159 of the second volume, the day is stated to be "the 29th March!" At page 272 of the first volume it is asserted, "Towards the end of September, Madame Malibran quitted Roissy for England;" and at page 83 of the second volume, it is written, "On the afternoon of Sunday, the 11th September 1836, Madame Malibran de Beriot and her husband arrived at Manchester." THE FACT IS, she arrived there Saturday the 10th, and *towards the end of September* (viz. the 23d) she died! Then at page 278 of the first volume it is gravely stated, "The committee appointed for conducting the Manchester Musical Festival wished to pay De Beriot the full amount of his wife's engagement, though she had only performed twice. *This he refused!*" He did no such thing, for he received every farthing of it. I could mention many other similar inaccuracies, but will finish my remarks on this very trumpery piece of biography by making one more quotation. At page 59 of the second volume it is written, "Nothing could exceed the regard felt by Madame Malibran towards the Duchess of St. Albans—a feeling which was equally reciprocated on the occasion of her last benefit and appearance in London, the 16th July, 1838. The Duchess, after the performance, visited her in her dressing-room, and presented her with a flacon, and, by way of souvenir, her embroidered

“handkerchief.” Whether such attentions were ever paid to Malibran by the Duchess, I cannot take upon myself to say ; but, as respects the other part of the sentence, THE FACT IS, Madame Malibran never took a benefit on any 16th of July, either at Drury Lane or Covent Garden ; and on the 16th of July, 1838, she had been dead nearly two years !!

After this precious display, proceeding, as it is stated, from her intimate friends, let us have no more biography. You may, as it has been laid down, guard against your enemies, if you can but be protected from your “friends.” The mind of this gifted syren is the only particle of her composition now worth inquiring into ; and as its elements may best be gathered from herself, specimens of her feelings in various moods are herewith subjoined from her correspondence.

\* In consequence of *La Sonnambula* proving so in attractive during her first engagement, and the time it would require for her to perfect herself in another character, an application was made to her to repeat the part of *Count Belino*, which she had played in America. Mark her reply :—

“MY DEAR BUNN,

“I cannot promise to play the part of *Count Belino*. The music is exceedingly weak, and “after the *Sonnambula* I am not capable of singing “*baby’s music* ; however, I don’t say positively *no*, “until I have seen both the *music* and the *pice* again,

“ for it is about eight years that I have not even  
 “ herd of the part; therefore, be so good as to send  
 “ the whole to me, and I shall give you a *conscien-*  
 “ *tious* answer, quite

“ À la

“ MALIBRAN.”

The contempt with which she treated such music as is to be found in the opera of *The Cabinet*, may be gathered from her absolute refusal to play *Prince Orlando* :

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

“ Immédiatement après que je vous ai écrit, je me  
 “ suis mise au piano, pour regarder cette partition que  
 “ vous m’avez envoyée. Je suis bien fachée d’être.  
 “ obligée de vous dire que ce rôle ne me plaît pas  
 “ de tout, et quant à la musique je ne la chanterai  
 “ jamais, elle est d’un genre qui n’est pas le mien, et  
 “ par conséquent elle ne me va pas en aucune façon.

“ Je vous envoie donc la partition, et vous prie de  
 “ ne plus m’en parler.

“ Voici donc une *réponse* positive et négative.  
 “ Veuillez, donc, lorsque vous me proposerez un  
 “ opéra—veuillez, dis-je, choisir quelque chose qui  
 “ me convienne, et qui soit dans mes moyens, et non  
 “ pas hors des confins du peu que je possède. Mille  
 “ compliments en hâte.

“ MALIBRAN.”



Then comes her receipt for the completion of her first engagement, followed by a copy of her second engagement; in signing which, as I have before apprised the reader, she wept tears of mortified vanity, passion, and wounded pride; and yet who could avoid laughing at tears shed for the great calamity of receiving *only* 1000*l.* for about a dozen performances?

RECEIPT FOR THE BALANCE OF HER FIRST  
ENGAGEMENT.

" MY DEAR MR. BUNN,

" In great haste I answer your note, and accuse  
" the receipt of a cheque of 1,000*l.* (thousand  
" pounds) to be paid by Mr. Charles Hopkinson,  
" Barton and Co., being the other half of my engage-  
" ment, which was finished the 31st May, 1833.

" With many thanks

" And compliments,

" M. F. MALIBRAN.

" 8th of June, 1833."

A MELANCHOLY ENGAGEMENT OF £1000 FOR TWELVE  
PERFORMANCES!

" Madame Malibran is hereby engaged to perform  
" at either the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, or Thea-  
" tre Royal Covent Garden, for the month of June,  
" to perform three times per week, for the sum of  
" 1,000*l.* sterling, on the conditions of her previous  
" engagement; except that she is at liberty to sing

“ at all the concerts, provided they do not interfere  
“ with the performances or rehearsals of the said  
“ theatres.

“ Monsieur de Beriot is also to have a concert at one  
“ of the said theatres, and is to be entitled to a clear  
“ two-thirds of the receipts of the evening.

“ M. F. MALIBRAN.

“ London May 24, 1833.”

A note like the following is worth all the biography in the world, written between the struggle of sickness and the desire of not disappointing the public :

“ MY DEAR MISTER BUNN,

“ I am so horse that I am really afraid not to be  
“ able to sing to-night. I tell you this, in order to  
“ give you time to do something to prevent a noise  
“ this evening at the theatres.

“ It makes me the most unhappy being in the  
“ world. Do come and see me; you'll judge by  
“ yourself. You know also, that unless it was quite  
“ impossible for me to sing, I would not give it up  
“ upon the mere consideration of hurting myself a  
“ little.

“ Come—that's the best way to see the evidence  
“ of what I tell you in the greatest distress.

“ MARIA.”

Malibran had taken a great fancy to an opera by

Monsieur Chelard, and the only reason why the management did not cotton to it as warmly as she did, was, that being but in one act, it was not considered of importance enough for an artiste who was receiving such inordinate terms. It will be seen that in submitting another character to her consideration, she still harps upon Chelard's operetta, and then breaks out into one of her irresistible bits of drollery on the subject of money matters :

“ 10th May.

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR,

“ Je ne puis vous donner une décision de suite. Il faut que je voie le rôle, pour savoir s'il me convient. Il faut aussi que j'aie la pièce. Je suis fachée seulement que vous me proposiez autre chose que la pièce de Chelard, que je sais *presque par cœur*, ce qui est d'un immense avantage pour la promptitude de la mise en scene. Je connais mon sujet, et en suis enchantée. Au lieu que l'autre, je ne le connais pas de tout, comme musique ni comme poème !

“ Il me reste maintenant une chose à rappeler à votre mémoire.

“ Lorsque je me suis mise en route pour Londres, sans avoir reçu l'avis de Mr. Rothchild *directement*, je m'attendois à recevoir à Londres le premier paiement le deux Mai, comme cela est stipulé dans mon engagement; cette condition n'a pas été remplie. J'en attribue la faute aux immenses occupations que vous donne le théâtre ; cependant,

“ je ne me suis pas munie de fonds nécessaires pour  
 “ attendre plus long-temps, je vous prie de me faire  
 “ parvenir le plus-tot possible une traite sur le ban-  
 “ quier chez lequel a été fait le premier *dépot des*  
 “ *mille livres*.

“ Vouz croyez bien, mon cher Mr. Bunn, qu'il n'y  
 “ a pas de mauvaise humeur de ma part ; n'est ce pas ?  
 “ Pas plus que de manque de confiance, mais bien une  
 “ totale détresse dans la bourse—il y a une baisse  
 “ complète dans les *fonds publics* de ma bourse . .  
 “ . . . . . Oh ! Capitain Poulihil ! O !  
 “ Providence de ces pauvres *crieuses* de *musique* !  
 “ Viens à mon secours, sans lequel je ne puis pas être  
 “ votre très humble et très obeïssante servante, pas  
 “ plus que la pauvre Amina qui vous dit à deux  
 “ mains jointes ! Ah, for pity sake, ah ! let me not  
 “ awake . . . . . until the little bag is  
 “ quite filled up with . . . . .  
 “ You know it will be *your* turn next.

“ MARIA.

“ I request the FAVOUR of an *answer* about Che-  
 “ lard's opera.”

Then, for cunning, for archness, for humour, and yet withal a sensitiveness as to the possibility of her failing in public, read this, enclosing me an anonymous letter, with an article in it the writer recommended to be sent to the *Times* newspaper :

"MAY I HAVE A BOX FOR TO-MORROW, TO GO AND SEE  
THE SONNAMBULA ?

"MY DEAR MR. BUNN,

"As I left the theatre last night I received this  
letter which I send to you, not knowing what to do  
with it.

"Do you know that it strikes me, if you let this  
letter go to the *Times*, it will only make things  
worse ? For it seems to me that the writer takes  
too much notice of the King's Theatre being *well*  
*attended*, as I believe he says.

"What do you think of that ?

"I think, if you were to answer in my name, that  
I would prefer that he should not take any notice of  
me, or if he did, not to say anything about the  
Italian Theatre, nor of my losing popularity in  
the credit of the aristocratic folks. What do you  
think of that ?

"I never take any notice of these things ; but  
this time, as it so happens that my opinion is  
asked upon the question, and as I am afraid that  
such an article in the newspaper, *Times*, might  
have some bad influence upon the mind of the  
tender feet, *thick ancles*, and *read elbows* of the  
suprematy of high ranked, curled up, *tittled*  
*noses*, I think it exceedingly wise, prudent, and  
*circumspect* to pop into your room my letter  
enfolding the enclosed, upon which you must *rumi-*

“*nate* and deliberate, and *muse* the whole of to-mor-  
 “row morning, until your ideas will be expounded  
 “on the pretious subject, and upon the many *orto-*  
 “*graphical* mistakes made, both in writing and in  
 “spelling

“By your most obedient

“Scribbler and nonsense-teller,

“MARIA, &c. &c. &c.

“Monday, after having been delighted with the German singers.”

“Then again, upon money affairs, mark the grasp of the little enchantress. She came to London to sing for her brother’s concert in June, 1834; and thinking that one night’s performance of *La Sonnambula* might be profitable, I asked upon what terms she would play, trusting that, as it had unfortunately not been so attractive as could be wished in the preceding season, her expectations would not be such as to defeat my object. She made, as will be seen, the modest demand of 250*l.*, to be paid the morning of her performance!

“MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

“Pressée par le temps comme je le suis, n’ayant que  
 “peu de jours à rester à Londres, puisque je pars pour  
 “l’Italie *avant la fin du mois*; j’accepterais volon-  
 “tiers votre offre de jouer *la Sonnambule* en Anglais  
 “pour une soirée, seulement aux termes *de deux cent*  
 “*cinquante livres sterlings*, payables le matin même  
 “de la représentation. J’ai cru devoir vous dire de

“ suite mes intentions, pour ne pas perdre de temps  
 “ en correspondences ou en conférences, qui ne  
 “ changeraient rien à mes intentions.

“ Recevez mes compliments empressés.

“ M. F. MALIBRAN.

“ Le 21 Juin, Saturday Morning.

“ P.C.—Un oui, ou non, de suite, s’il vous plait.”

“ To MONS. MONS. BUNN.

“ Dans le cas où vous accepteriez, veuillez men-  
 “ tionner les termes contenus dans la presente lettre?”

Here is the copy of a letter which she sent me, announcing her arrival to fulfil her last engagement; and on coming to the theatre in the evening, she said,  
 “ I wrote it in the hall while they unpacked the  
 “ carriage, and signed it De Beriot, to tell you from  
 “ myself that I was married :

“ Here we are—

“ A’ l’instant j’arrive, à votre disposition, et bien  
 “ portante. Je désirerais bien aller ce soir au théâtre  
 “ dans le dressed circle, ou box. Croyez-vous que  
 “ je pourrais y aller? Un mot de réponse; *mon rôle*,  
 “ *s’il vous plait*.

“ In haste,

“ MARIA DE BERIOT.

“ No. 59, Conduit-street.”

What greater insight into the mind and character of such a being can be furnished than evidences

such as these, emanating from her under different excitements, all indicative of those various feelings by which the whole tenor of her life was regulated. Truly indeed has it been written,

“ Women with painted forms,  
“ They may deceive men, but cannot deceive worms ;”

and though the charge conveyed herein be not brought against her, the moral is the same ; for those “ post-humous rascals” have long since been banqueting on the cheek that was once so full of bloom, and the voice of lament has succeeded to the voice of music, and —and —“ Eheu fugaces, Posthume, Posthume, labuntur anni”—and—and—

“ How are the mighty fallen, and the beauteous passed away !”



## CHAPTER VI.

Disadvantages of a clean over a dirty house—Monody on Madame Malibran—View of her resting-place—Death of Mr. Braham inspiring new life in Mr. Sinclair—Madame Schroeder and Madame Schneider—Forrest's last address in America, and first appearance in England—Difference between the performers of the two countries—Mrs. Norton—Deaths of George Colman, George Harris, and John Bannister—Lord Byron's opinion of Colman—Another poet's opinion of himself—Correspondence with a variety of people in a variety of ways—Moore, Wilkie, Chantrey, Parker, Ries, Leigh Hunt, Webbe, Jenny Vertpré, Mademoiselle Duvernay, &c.

ANOTHER, among the many disadvantages under which the manager of one of the Theatres Royal labours, is the heavy tax of beautifying the interior of the building—a tax that was at this time doubly onerous, from the dirty state of the rival house: and the worst part of this duty is, that all the “golden opinions” the decorations of a theatre may win, will not add a single one to the treasury. The embellishments of Drury Lane Theatre, on its opening for the season of 1836-37, cost more than 1,500*l.*, and are the very same to be seen there at this present writing, enter-

ing now on their fourth year of service. The reader shall have a full detail of them, that he may know what money has been spent to sustain the olden glories of this establishment, and to enable him (if he will have the kindness to take so much trouble) to give the lie direct to those slanderous magpies who talk of my having made Drury Lane Theatre a bear-garden, and having left it a dust-hole. I was told that my successor grumbled at having had literally to take out twenty-eight cart-loads of rubbish from the house, before he could begin to put it in order, and my reply, on hearing this, was, that he would bring as many into it before he opened, and leave double the number behind him when he left—and seeing what has *been* done, and what is likely to *be* done, I think so still. But to the ornamental department:

#### DECORATIONS OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

*The Ceiling*—Light gold colour enrichments supporting emblematical cameos, radiate towards the centre, and are connected by slender festoons of flowers; intersecting these at the base are eight bold semicircular panels, representing openings in the ceiling, showing the sky, with groups of children, allegorically illustrating the drama and the sciences connected with it. The ground is a soft cream colour.

*The Cove* is separated from the ceiling by a white fret enrichment on a lavender ground, and is divided into compartments of various tints of colour, orna-

mented with emblematical devices, bands of flowers, &c., and slightly relieved by gold.

*On the Gallery Front* are tastefully drawn dancing figures holding wreaths and festoons of flowers, interspersed with musical trophies, forming a sort of continuous frieze, of a novel and pleasing character. The second circle is divided by gilt enrichments into panels, in each of which is a raffle foliage scroll containing birds of rich plumage; and between these are smaller panels containing grotesque masks, on a maroon ground.

*The First Circle* is also formed into panels containing cameo paintings, surrounded by arabesque ornaments, and between these again are medallions containing heads of Tragedy, Comedy, &c., on a clear blue ground, and surrounded by sparkling gold ornaments.

*The Dress Circle.*—The panels of this circle contain well-executed paintings illustrating the best known subjects from the acted dramas of Shakspeare. These panels are separated by rich gilt dwarf pilasters, which form the base of the elegant white and gold columns of the box fronts.

*The Proscenium.*—The columns of the proscenium are again burnished gold relieved by white. In the box fronts, between them, on a crimson velvet ground, are richly gilt ornaments.

The general style of the decorations is after the Halls of the Vatican, painted by Raffaele, though not at all copied from it.

Look at this fine display, actually got up in the very first style by that first of all decorators, Mr. Crace, and at a cost which added 500*l.* a year to the lease for the term. And the *cui bono*? It was beautiful to look upon—an artist might pass a pleasant and useful morning in contemplating it, and, taken altogether, it was much more worth beholding than many things that were put upon the stage; but these doings never attract a penny piece. The people look upon them as a matter of course: if you do not pay such attentions, you are considered in every respect a dirty personage; and if you do pay them, at however high a price, you get no credit for it. You have the gratification certainly of receiving company in a splendid mansion, but you also have the gratification of knowing that they only think it their due; and that unless the attractions on the stage are as dazzling as those on the front of the boxes, they would flock in greater numbers into the filthiest theatre in the metropolis. But if I have not already shown that everything is *against*, and nothing *for*, a London manager, my present labour, like my past, has been indeed in vain.

The opening of Drury Lane Theatre, which had been announced to take place on the 1st, was postponed to the 8th of October, owing to the melancholy circumstance dwelt upon in the preceding chapter. I told you some pages back, patient reader, of the sacrilege I committed on the coffin of the deceased Madame Malibran, when

“ The corse and I were left alone together ;”

and it is perhaps a pardonable vanity which, after having mentioned the fact, induces me to introduce the result, viz. THE MONODY ITSELF, which was spoken on the occasion of opening the theatre. It is not put forward on the score of any poetical pretensions ; but considering where it was written, and under what feelings it was written, where it was delivered, and the interest which on that spot had been attached to the object of it, it may not be deemed altogether intrusive :—

#### MONODY.

&c. &c. &c.

Changed is the scene since, one brief summer past,  
 Our theme of thanks by you was welcomed last ;  
 Changed too each thought, which used to plume the flight  
 Of hope and joy, on this our opening night—  
 The smiles which beamed around us, the response  
 That glowed within us, clouded all at once.  
 Enchantress of the nations ! She who breathed  
 The sweetest notes that ever music wreathed,  
 Whose magic tones were wont to pour along  
 Those compassed sounds, unknown before to song,  
 Hath passed for ever from us—cold and still  
 The lip which once could every bosom thrill ;  
 Glazed too the eye, whose intellectual fire  
 Could light the dull, and e'en the bright inspire :  
 And now she sleeps, if that may grief atone,  
 Within the land which loved her as its own.  
 Here, then, where late the magic of her art  
 Subdued the stoutest, melted every heart,  
 It may be pardoned if we bring to view  
 Some humble tribute to such greatness due !

*Here the scene changes, and discovers*

THE MILL IN "LA SONNAMBULA."

Behold the scene, familiar to each eye  
As were its tears she could command, or dry ;  
The mill, the stream, the cottage, and the dale—  
The youth who loved her, and believed her tale.

*Here the scene changes to*

THE PRISON IN "FIDELIO."

Then pass we on to where, in hopes to save  
Her captive lord, Fidelio dug his grave,  
The daring heroine, the devoted wife,  
Who risked her own, to save a husband's life.

*Here the scene changes to*

THE DESERTS IN "THE MAID OF ARTOIS."

Then further on, along yon barren sand  
The hapless maiden bathed her lover's hand,  
Prepared the latest gasp of life to give,  
And die with him her heart could not outlive !  
Where is the breast, so uninspired and cold,  
Could scenes of such pervading force behold,  
Nor, while he bowed to woman's power before,  
Gaze on, and wonder at its worth the more !  
These are the scenes whose form we would recall,  
Which want, alas ! the soul that made them all—  
And now but serve to show, in sad array,  
The mighty and the beauteous passed away.  
Now turn we to that fane, whose cloisters rang  
With the rich strain her dying accents sang ;  
Beneath whose sacred dome in peace now lie  
All of that gifted spirit which *could* die !  
And thus, when other ties may be forgot,  
Lov'd be the sanctuary, blest the spot,  
Whence the last notes she warbled into air  
Ascended into heaven, and rested there.

*Here the scene changes to*

THE INTERIOR OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF MANCHESTER.

At the conclusion of the requiem, performed at Drury Lane Theatre on this occasion, immediately following the delivery of the monody, that exquisite finale to the *Sonnambula*, familiar to us all as household words, was introduced in a transposed shape, and, though sung as slowly as possible, the first line

“ Gentle minstrel ! whose life now closing,”

caused throughout a crowded theatre the same momentary but convulsive thrill which I witnessed in others, and participated in myself, when “Holy, Holy” was chanted the week before in the collegiate church, on the solemn occasion of her interment.

When the death of Mr. Braham, some time before, had been formally announced in the public papers, and even his biography submitted, with deep regret, for the information of the world at large, Sinclair had just returned from America ; and believing the report to be true, pitched his terms in a much higher key than his voice, and grounded his so doing on the basis of Braham’s death having left *him* “the only salmon in the market.” So it was in the instance of poor Malibran. Madame Schroeder Devrient, both by talent and favouritism, was the only successor that could be pointed out, though immeasurably behind her in both points of view. The last time that admirable artiste had visited England, was with the German company in 1833, on which occasion

she received £40 per night. On applying to her now, she demanded £120 per night, and on my requesting to be informed of her reason for such an increase, she replied, "*Because you gave the same to MADAME MALIBRAN.*" To try to convince one performer that she is neither in point of personal nor professional advantages equal to another, is a somewhat delicate task—to effect it an utter impossibility. All that my logic *could* effect, was to act upon a favourite plan of Elliston's, "split the difference;" and as there was one of £80 between us, we *did* split it, and instead of £120 per night, she was engaged at £80, being £40 more than she had before. I was also anxious to effect an engagement with Madame Schneider, who had been received with so much favour on her former visit; and having imparted my wishes to a friend who was in correspondence with her, he undertook to procure me her answer, written in English, that I might form some slight judgment of the progress she had recently made in the study of our language. I subjoin her reply, not in any intended disparagement of her advancement, nor as being the reason of our negotiation having fallen to the ground; but merely as a humorous evidence of the extent to which the idioms of one language mar the common sense of another.

"Having received your kindly writing, I will endeavor me to answer in English, to prove to you all my thanks and obligations for your kindness and



“ friendship. The death of Mad. Malibran seized  
“ me very much, and I am fearful to appear on the  
“ same stage where this eminent talent was received  
“ with such a great success. Poor Mad. Malibran !

“ The conditions between me and the Royal  
“ Theatre are changed, and I am free for the next  
“ spring, as the best season for London. I would be  
“ very grateful to you, sir, if you could obtain some  
“ engagement for me by the German or Italian  
“ Opera. For performing in English, I doubt to  
“ pronounce this difficult language well enough to  
“ appear on the English stage; but it is possible that  
“ I could succeed, though I never essay it. (Mad.  
“ Schroeder Devrient told me yesterday to have ac-  
“ cepted the invitation for the next season to sing in  
“ German.) You ask to know the sum I would re-  
“ quire for two months. Unknown with the dra-  
“ matical circumstances, I am embarrassed with my  
“ pretensions; when I was first in London I received  
“ 6,000 francs for two months, and I think not to  
“ desire indiscreetly of you requiring 8,000. You  
“ would oblige me very much if you could let me  
“ know the repertory of the German, Italian, and  
“ English Opera. More grateful would I be, if you  
“ send me the English words of ‘ La Sonnambula,’  
“ and of other operas translated in English, to pre-  
“ pare me this winter for the next season. Can you  
“ not succeed to obtain an engagement, so I am re-  
“ solved to undertake a great travel for the coming  
“ year, and beginning with Peterborough, from where

“ I received an invitation, I hope returning to pass  
“ London. I am impatient to see you, my dear sir,  
“ to return to London, where I passed a short but  
“ happy time, and to let hear my progresses to the  
“ English public, which received my first perform-  
“ ances with indulgence. I put in your hands my  
“ wishes, and I am sure you shall do your possible  
“ for my interest.

“ I beg your pardon, sir, if I wrote badly, but  
“ being without any exercise to speak in Germany,  
“ I forgot all, and you shall know that exercise is  
“ the best teacher.

“ I recommend me to your friendship, my dear

“ Sir, and expect with impatience

“ Your next writing,

“ MASCHINHA SHNEIDER.

“ Dresden, 7 Oct. 1836.”

A matter of considerable theatrical moment attracted public attention at this time. An arrangement had been made between Mr. Willis Jones, a personal friend of Mr. Edwin Forrest and myself, for a given number of performances by this gentleman at Drury Lane, and great expectations were raised upon the subject. There were more reasons than one for such excitement. Up to the period of Mr. Forrest making his appearance amongst us, the different performers from America, who had *debuted*

on the London stage, were, with a slight exception or two, complete failures. Then, again, Mr. Forrest was, as he is, and as he deserves to be, the idol of his country's stage ; and then, again, his reception was to be the test by which the future exertions of our performers were to be tried and rewarded across the Atlantic. Mr. Forrest's address to the audience of the Chesnut Street Theatre, previous to his departure for Europe on this expedition, is well worth preserving :

“ Ladies and Gentlemen—It is impossible for me  
“ to express sufficiently the gratitude I feel for the  
“ warm approbation and overflowing audiences with  
“ which I have been honoured during my brief en-  
“ gagement. Accept, however, my most heartfelt  
“ thanks.

“ The engagement which I am about to fulfil in  
“ London, was not of my seeking. While I was in  
“ England, I was repeatedly importuned with solici-  
“ tations, and the most liberal offers were made to  
“ me. I finally consented, not for my own sake, for  
“ my ambition is satisfied with the applauses of my  
“ own countrymen, but partly in compliance with the  
“ wishes of a number of American friends, and partly  
“ to solve a doubt which is entertained by many of  
“ our citizens, *whether Englishmen would receive an*  
“ *American actor with the same favour which is here*  
“ *extended to them !!!* This doubt, so far as I have  
“ had an opportunity of judging, is, I think, without

“ foundation. During my residence in England,  
“ I found among the English people the most un-  
“ bounded hospitality, and the warmest affection for  
“ my beloved country and her institutions. With  
“ this impression I have resolved to present to them  
“ an American tragedy, supported by the humble  
“ efforts of the individual who stands before you. If  
“ I fail—I fail. But whatever may be the result, the  
“ approbation of that public which first stamped the  
“ native dramatist and actor, will ever be my proud-  
“ est recollection.”

This “ begging the question ” is the only point on which I differed with Mr. Forrest in opinion, in the view he took of the respective positions of the English and American stages. With the exception of Mr. Forrest, there is no American performer, whom I have seen, that has any right to expect on the London stage the favour which has been extended to English performers on the principal stages in America. I put out of the question any nonsensical matter of hospitality, which is the duty of all countries to give, and the right of all countries to expect. I speak of the public patronage of public talent. Most of our performers who have visited our transatlantic allies, have been persons of high station and acknowledged attainments, and admitted to be so by the most enlightened audience of Europe; and as it is not yet heresy to say that neither the patrons of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, &c., can lay claim to the same degree of refinement, nor their

performers to the same order of ability as ours, the case is very different. It could never be expected, because Mr. Cooper and Mr. George Jones were not received in this country with the same favour they were accustomed to in their own, that Mr. Kean and Mr. Charles Kemble should meet with similar treatment in America; nor would it be reasonable to claim for Mr. Hackett *here* the *same* success which Mr. Mathews met with *there*. It was therefore that I considered the declaration quoted, on the part of Mr. Forrest, ill timed and unnecessary. No one, who went to see Mr. Forrest make his debüt amongst us, went there to give him a welcome, because any English performer or performers had been well received in his "beloved country." They believed, upon the faith of the high reports which had acted as *avant courriers* to his arrival, that he was a man of genius, and they were prepared to welcome him accordingly. The first sentence I heard Mr. Forrest deliver, at his first rehearsal on the Drury Lane stage, convinced me that he testified, in his own person, the truth of his favourite apothegm, "In an enlightened country "the only aristocracy which should be acknowledged "is the aristocracy of mind," though I did not, and do not, subscribe to the doctrine. He is a man of strong mind, great energy, and fine declamatory powers; and although his level speaking is occasionally infected by a provincialism which gives many of his words a sound that does not belong to them, it is but a slight speck on a disk of great light.

There has been no performer that I have seen play, save and except Mr. Kean, and his son, who has half the earnestness of Mr. Forrest, and earnestness is half the battle ; and as one proof of it, I can safely say, that when in the arena, where *the Gladiator*,

“ Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday,”

was required to kneel at the foot of the emperor, presiding over such “playthings of a crowd,” he exclaimed to the officer, who dictated this duty to him,

“ Kneel thou, whose craven soul was formed for crouching ;

“ I am here to FIGHT !”

and when I gazed on the noble athletic form of him who had just given so proper an intimation of his prowess, I felt extremely glad it was not I who had to fight with him. Mr. Forrest is a fine actor, and a fine fellow ; and although we happened to differ very much upon one point, and upon one point only, and that was an apocalyptic one, I trust he will accept this faint tribute, whether it meets his eye in the crowded halls of admiring auditors, or

“ When he strays by the wave of the Schuylkill alone,”

from one who properly estimates his public talent and his private worth.

A dramatic production from a charming novelist, and the admired of all beholders, was at this time recalled to my attention by the receipt of the following letter :

“ Hampton Court Palace,  
“ Monday, October 9th, 1836.

“ SIR,

“ I take this opportunity of reminding you of a piece  
“ you looked at last season, founded on Mr. Beck-  
“ ford’s celebrated story of *Vathek*. I have entirely  
“ remodelled the opening and concluding scenes,  
“ which was, I believe, your object in returning it to  
“ me, and I would like to hear from you at your lei-  
“ sure respecting the probability of its representation  
“ at Drury Lane, and at what time it would be brought  
“ out. I trust you will spare a minute from your  
“ numerous avocations to reply to my question, as I  
“ am at present anxious to avail myself of my talents  
“ for writing, and am indeed obliged to make arrange-  
“ ments respecting such works as I may have by me  
“ nearly or entirely completed, amongst which is the  
“ drama Mr. Bentick brought for your approval.

“ Wishing Drury Lane all success, in spite of the  
“ stunning and irreparable blow which has fallen at  
“ a moment when we looked forward eagerly to the  
“ renewed efforts of the most gifted singer and actress  
“ of our day, poor Malibran,

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Yours obedient,

“ CAROLINE NORTON.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.”

The terms of intimacy on which I had the pleasure  
of being with Mrs. Norton’s brother and several of

her friends, the production of a play by such a delightful writer, and the expression even of a wish from one so highly gifted, laying aside any suppositional reasons of a temporary nature, were claims it required more than the ordinary fortitude of a manager perhaps to withstand, and I know I have been blamed for withstanding them: but I felt the exquisite beauties of Mrs. Norton's metrical compositions were so overloaded by a pressure of dialogue, and a redundancy of scenic effects, the fidelity and rapid succession of which it would have puzzled any scene-painters and mechanists to follow, that it was at least a duty to point them out to her. She favoured me with an opportunity of so doing, and was pleased to make the alterations she considered necessary in consequence of our conference. But important changes in a piece once constructed, and finished upon that construction, are more difficult of achievement than re-writing such piece altogether; and with the subsequent occupation of this endowed authoress upon pleasanter and more profitable labour, I lost the opportunity of presenting the public with a work which a little more knowledge of the circumscription of stage rules, or stage necessities, would have rendered as fascinating as all her other productions.

The dramatic and literary world experienced at this time a severe loss in the death of George Colman the younger, who died at his house in Brompton.



ton-square, the 26th of October, 1836. I can remember no instance of so celebrated a man leaving this world with so very little notice; for, excepting a few lines in one or two journals, I do not believe any comment on his death passed beyond the circle of his friends. So completely ignorant was I even of his illness, that I directed an official letter, of which the subjoined is a copy, to be addressed to him, in his public capacity, on the subject of the examiner's fees. Having been questioned before the Lords appointed by his late Majesty to inquire into the propriety of reducing this charge, and being apprised that a reduction would be made either by the examiner himself, or under the sanction of Government, it was deemed advisable that the inquiry should be made to the fountain-head at once :

“ The manager of Drury Lane Theatre presents his  
“ compliments to the Examiner of Plays, and takes  
“ leave to inquire if (in contemplation of such an  
“ arrangement being made by Government) he is pre-  
“ pared to adopt any graduated scale of the fees  
“ attendant hitherto by courtesy on the examination of  
“ theatrical pieces. The present inconsistent charge  
“ for entertainments of all descriptions is such, that  
“ the altered aspect of dramatic affairs will no  
“ longer warrant its payment: and it is with  
“ the view, therefore, of avoiding the alternative of  
“ refusing to pay fees unsanctioned by law, that

“ this application is made, to establish some principle which may be rendered permanent by custom.

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“ October 15th, 1836.”

The annexed reply, written only seven days before his death, and probably the last letter Mr. Colman ever wrote, apprised me for the first time of his illness, and much rather would I have suffered my right hand to have been chopped off, than have allowed it to address an old friend, upon any subject, at such an awful moment—a feeling I instantly communicated to him in as delicate and kind a manner as I was master of:

“ 19th Oct. 1836, Brompton Square.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Your communication to me of the 17th instant (which is a repetition of the attempt to diminish my income during your management under Capt. Polhill) has reached me, dangerously ill, in bed. I assert my claims, not upon courtesy, but upon a prescriptive right of a hundred years' standing, bating two or three months.

“ I cannot answer it till I recover, and if I do not recover, you will have to settle the question with my successor. In the mean time I shall submit what has passed between us to the Lord Chamberlain. The only influence upon my mind on this

“occasion will be the suggestions of his lordship,  
 “or the commands of Government. At present  
 “things will go on as they are.

“Yours &c.,

“G. COLMAN.

“To A. Bunn, Esq.”

The reduction in question was subsequently made by command of the King, too late, however, to affect Mr. Colman. At one period of his life, a more popular man was not in existence; for the festive board of the prince or the peer was incomplete without Mr. Colman. He has left behind him a perpetuity of fame in his dramatic works, and much is it to be lamented that no chronicle has been preserved of his various and most extraordinary *jeux d'esprit*. He has moreover left behind quite enough of renown, could he lay claim to none other, to be found in the following tribute from the pen of Lord Byron: “I have met George Colman occasionally, “and thought him extremely pleasant and convivial. “Sheridan’s humour, or rather wit, was always satir- “nine and sometimes savage; he never laughed, (at “least that *I* saw, and I watched him,) but Colman “did. If I had to *choose*, and could not have both “at a time, I should say, let me begin the evening “with Sheridan, and finish it with Colman. Sheridan “for dinner, Colman for supper; Sheridan for claret “or port, but Colman for everything, from the “madeira and champagne at dinner, the claret with

“ *a layer of port* between the glasses, up to the punch  
 “ of the night, and down to the grog, or gin and  
 “ water, of daybreak. All these I have threaded with  
 “ both the same. Sheridan was a grenadier company  
 “ of lifeguards, but Colman a whole regiment—of  
 “ *light infantry*, to be sure, but still a regiment.”

In addition to all this, he left an affectionate heart behind him, who erected to his memory, in Kensington Church, a tablet with this record engraven thereon, from the pen of James Smith, of “Rejected Addresses” memory :

“ SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

“ GEORGE COLMAN THE YOUNGER,

“ Who succeeded his father as patentee\* of the Haymarket Theatre.

“ He was

“ Pre-eminent as a dramatist,

“ Admired as a poet,

“ Conspicuous as a wit,

“ And beloved as a man.

“ Colman, the Muses’ child, the drama’s pride,

“ Whose works can waken joy, or grief impart :

“ Humour with pathos, wit with sense allied,

“ A playful fancy, and a feeling heart ;

“ His task accomplished and his circuit run,

“ Here finds at last his monumental bed.

“ Take then, departed shade, this lay from one

“ Who lov’d thee living, and laments thee dead !”

“ Born October 21, 1762.

“ Died October 26, 1836.”

\* A mistake : there is no patent to the Haymarket Theatre—it opens by the Lord Chamberlain’s license.

It is a remarkable circumstance that Colman's intimate friend, Captain George Harris, son of the former, and brother of the late proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, died on the same day as Colman ;\* and in a few days afterwards departed from this scene of action a performer who had done credit to many of our author's best characters, though too long removed from the profession to affect any part of its constitution, save that grand desideratum, its respectability; for certainly a man as ripe in years, more full of honour, never descended into the tomb than JOHN BANNISTER.

Having found amongst my papers some versicles strung together at breakfast, on receiving a package by one of the morning's messengers, possessing very little claim either to reason or rhyme, I submit them as such to the reader, as chiming in with the period :

To-day has brought a bag of letters,  
 Some from one's equals—some one's betters ;  
 Thanks from illustrious Francis Chantrey  
 For the free run of Drury's pantry ;  
 Ditto, Sir David Wilkie sendeth,  
 Who, when from labour he unbendeth,  
 Sees no great reason wherefore mayn't one  
 Look at a scene as well as paint one.  
 Then Parkes writes word the peace of Europe  
 In revolution finds a sure hope.

\* A much more singular theatrical coincidence than this is worth recording, viz. that the three most celebrated actors of their times, Eckhof in Germany, Lekain in France, and Garrick in England, all died in the season of 1778-79.

Poor Malibran ! he mourns the loss of her  
 Like a well-seasoned, cool philosopher,  
 Weeps o'er the stage, but cannot mend it,  
 And says what novelty he meets, he'll send it.  
 MSS. have come in by the bevy—  
 The one by Ries confounded heavy ;  
 Leigh Hunt one Webbe\* much recommendeth,  
 A bard who verse and music blendeth,  
 But then in bardship's vast dominion  
 None of himself holds such opinion !

\* The subjoined letter, subsequently received from this gentleman, will explain the meaning of my doggrel better than the doggrel itself :

“ 37, Leicester Square, April 22, 1837.

“ SIR,

“ I wish I could inspire you with confidence in the success of my opera. When I said it would ‘cost nothing,’ of course I did not mean that those common preliminaries of “copying parts,” &c. could be got over; but I meant, what I now repeat, that an opera requiring less outlay in the production, or more calculated to win a *high prize* with a small stake, never was offered to you.

“ The circumstance of my being author and composer of the entire work is felt as a novelty, *promising something out of the usual way* ; and I understand there are those, having the means of giving public expression to the opinions they have formed of this opera, *who are impatient to seize the earliest occasion* they can with propriety take of giving it the open meed of their applause.

“ That I have not appeared before as a writer for the stage, is so far from being anything to my prejudice, that I take it to be all in my favour ; since it can only enhance the novelty of the announcement, and *magnify any merit* the work may exhibit. The town, on the other hand, is sufficiently saturated with tragic spectacles of one sort or another to welcome any *downright contrast*.

“ In conclusion, Sir, and I say it without offence to your other sup-

Six pages crammed from Jenny Vertpré,  
 Who's trying hard to make me *her* prey—  
 But who, save C——, cares ought for *her*, pray?  
 Then Thomas Moore regrets the offer  
 "I was so kind last night to proffer,"  
 He was compelled, with grievance hearty,  
 To give up for a dinner party—

"porters, I think you will hardly find one who would be able to bring to bear on a single piece *the united suffrages of the first critics, musical and literary*, as I have done in the case of this opera. The reviewers have told us a thousand times, that *until the poet is his own musician*, a real good opera cannot be written. It is to this union of the two capacities that I wish to direct my views; and my success in this first attempt of the kind will determine me to devote myself hereafter with increased energy to the theatre.

"I shall esteem it a favour if you will notice this letter at your convenience; and I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"EGERTON WEBBE.

"To Alfred Bunn, Esq."

Mr. Webbe is a young man of considerable abilities, and in this instance, had they been directed to the composition of an important operatic work, in which the genius of poetry and music was combined, and the result of which, however successful, would have exalted either, others might have been disposed to entertain even higher opinions of the author than he has delivered of himself in the foregoing communication; but when the reader is apprised that the "opera" in question was a burlesque entertainment in one or two acts, (I forget which, nor is it material,) of *Tom Thumb* construction, professing more musical, but possessing less humorous, matter than that popular burletta, the chances are, he will think the whole affair an illustration of "*Much Ado about Nothing*." Such was my impression; and while I should much like to see it acted, I cannot conceal my opinion, that if acted (in either Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatre) it will be damned.

A civil note from Miss Duvernay—  
Uncivil one from an attorney—  
Inquiries from Billy Lyon,  
The ballet corps who hath his eye on :  
A line from ——— which on “bully” borders,  
Asking a brace of double orders !  
I’d like, although he has a paper,  
To serve him as one does the scraper,  
Upon his impudence the strength of,  
Give him your dirty boot the length of.  
Martins, of fees who has a high sense,  
Demands those of the French play license ;  
To answer all I’ve scarce a minute—  
Enough work, or the devil’s in it !

Oct. 27, 1836.



## CHAPTER VII.

The examiner of plays unfit for his situation—Lord Chamberlain of a different opinion—Mr. Kemble and Mr. Bunn at issue upon the point—Mr. Knowles and Mademoiselle Duvernay—The Siege of Corinth—The Opera Buffa—Grimaldi's finale, and the manager's fall—Different conduct of Irish and English boys—Sir E. Bulwer a good hand at a bargain—His correspondence with the lessee—Elliston, Winston, and George Colman—A licenser a licentiate—Extract from the new scale of fees, and what they extract from the pocket.

AN event, without precedent, followed the death of Mr. Colman, in the appointment of his successor; that successor being, at the time of his appointment, an actor in the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Mr. Charles Kemble had been announced to perform the round of his favourite characters, prior to his final retirement from the stage; and during the progress of these performances, he was nominated to the office of "Examiner of all Theatrical Entertainments," vacant by the decease of the aforesaid George Colman. A gentleman more fitted for the situation could not possibly have been selected—a fine scholar, an experienced artist, and one bearing the high and honoured dramatic name of Kemble,

might justly claim, on his retirement from public life, so suitable a reward for long years of hard service. Had this place been conferred upon Mr. Kemble when he had ceased to be a member of the stage he had so long adorned, there could have been no ground for a single remark; but the selection of a performer in any one theatre (especially the rival patent house) to sit in judgment upon the forthcoming novelties of the other, to enable him to be possessed of the titles, plots, ingredients, &c., of those novelties; in fact, to put the whole disposable force of an establishment in the hands of its supposed enemy, was as novel as it was alarming an arrangement; but we will entertain the subject from its commencement. Immediately on the demise of Mr. Colman being made known to me, I applied to the proper quarter to ascertain who was to be his successor, as this document will show:

“Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“October 28, 1836.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Will you do me the favour to inform me to  
“whom, in the absence of any reader being ap-  
“pointed to succeed Mr. Colman, I am to send the  
“MSS. of the new pieces about to be produced at  
“this theatre?

“I am, my dear Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“A. BUNN.

“T. B. Mash, Esq. &c. &c.”

And the next day I received the subjoined official reply :

“ St. James’s, October 29, 1836.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Perhaps, before this reaches you, the Gazette  
“ will have informed you that Charles Kemble, Esq.,  
“ is appointed Examiner of Plays, &c., in the room  
“ of the late Mr. Colman.

“ Mr. Kemble resides at No. 11, Park-place,  
“ St. James’s.

“ Yours very truly,

“ T. B. MASH.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.”

On the day I received this reply, I despatched a communication, of which the following is a copy, to the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied with the manuscript of a new entertainment for which I sought the necessary license at his lordship’s hands :

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“ October 29, 1836.

“ MY LORD,

“ I take the liberty of transmitting to your lord-  
“ ship an entertainment, entitled ‘ *The Yankee*  
“ *Pedlar,*’ for your lordship’s license, which has  
“ only been awaiting the appointment of a successor  
“ to Mr. Colman. I beg leave to direct your lord-  
“ ship’s attention to the absolute necessity of the

“ concerns of so large an establishment as this being  
“ regulated with as much caution as possible—not  
“ merely from the rivalry which has always existed  
“ between the two patent houses, but from the in-  
“ jury this theatre has sustained (since the character  
“ of the other was last year so suddenly changed)  
“ by many of its productions being forestalled, if  
“ only in the title. Without, therefore, meaning the  
“ slightest disrespect to the gentleman your lord-  
“ ship has been pleased to appoint the reader of  
“ dramatic entertainments, (than whom no one can  
“ be by attainments more highly qualified,) I can-  
“ not view, without a reasonable apprehension, the  
“ selection of a performer and proprietor of the  
“ rival house deputed to sit in judgment upon the  
“ *productions of this*. In this feeling, I have pre-  
“ sumed to send this MS. direct to your lordship,  
“ on whose impartiality, discretion, and high cha-  
“ racter all must place the utmost reliance.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ My lord,

“ Your lordship’s obedient servant,

“ A. BUNN.

“ To the Marquis Conyngham, &c. &c. &c.  
Lord Chamberlain.”

This was despatched on Saturday, October 29th, and on Tuesday, November the 1st, I was favoured with the subjoined first official communication from the new examiner :

“ 11, Park-place, St. James's,

“ November 1, 1836.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have this day, only, received a manuscript entitled ‘ *The Yankee Pedlar*,’ which I perceive by the play-bills is advertised for performance this evening. To prove my desire to do everything in my power, consistently with my duty, to forward the interests of the theatre over which you preside, I have read it, and forwarded my application to the Lord Chamberlain for his license. I beg, however, to direct your attention to the irregularity of the proceeding, and to request that, in future, any manuscripts which you may desire to have licensed, may be forwarded to me in proper time. My messenger is this moment returned from Dudley-house; the Lord Chamberlain is unfortunately not at home; but I am convinced that he would not be displeased if, under the present circumstances, the piece were to be acted. The license shall be forwarded as soon as ever I receive it.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ C. KEMBLE.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.”

In the first place, to exculpate myself from the charge of apparent neglect, and, in the next place, to possess Mr. Kemble of the light in which I

viewed his extraordinary position, I immediately sent this reply to his letter :

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“ Nov. 1, 1836.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I am favoured with your letter, and in reply  
“ thereto I beg to enclose you two documents, viz.  
“ No. 1, a copy of my letter to Mr. Mash, inquiring  
“ to whom the MSS. of this theatre were to be sent  
“ until Mr. Colman’s successor was appointed ; and  
“ No. 2, a copy of my letter to the Lord Chamber-  
“ lain, enclosing the MS. of ‘ *The Yankee Pedlar*,’  
“ on hearing of your appointment.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ A. BUNN.

“ C. Kemble, Esq. ”

My answer did not appear to be at all satisfactory to the reigning authorities, and I had therefore, two days afterwards, an official rejoinder to the letter I addressed the Lord Chamberlain on the 29th of October—slightly smacking at the same time of dictation—which, together with my reply, are submitted to the reader :

" Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
" November 3, 1836.

" SIR,

" In the absence of Mr. Mash, I am directed by  
" the Lord Chamberlain to acquaint you, that all en-  
" tertainments of the stage to be submitted for his  
" lordship's license, are to be forwarded to the resi-  
" dence of Charles Kemble, Esq., the Examiner,  
" No. 11, Park-place, St. James's.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" WILLIAM MARTINS.

" Alfred Bunn, Esq.,  
" Theatre Royal Drury Lane."

" Theatre Royal Drury Lane,  
" Nov. 3, 1836.

" SIR,

" In compliance with the provisions of the act of  
" parliament therein provided, it is my duty to  
" transmit the MSS. of this theatre to his Majesty's  
" Lord Chamberlain, for his lordship's license, and  
" I shall not fail to do so.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" A. BUNN."

" W. Martins, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

The Theatre Royal Drury Lane and the Lord Chamberlain's office were now at complete issue; the

high chief officer of the one establishment requiring all our productions to be examined by a performer at the rival theatre, and the humble chief officer of the other establishment positively refusing to comply with such requisition. It was privately hinted to me that the King would take away the patent, and moreover remove me from his Majesty's household, to which I was then attached, if I resisted the authority of his chamberlain; but I told the gentleman (also of the court) giving me this hint, that if the King sent me to the Tower, I should continue to act upon the principle I had taken up. My argument was not based upon any personal objection, for I have before stated my opinion of Mr. Kemble's great qualifications for the office; and I do not hesitate to state my conviction, that he would never have permitted advantage to have been taken of the official station he occupied, to the detriment of the theatre against which his histrionic exertions were then being nightly made. But the slightest accident—to which even the most studious watchfulness is sometimes subject—might have betrayed, unknown to Mr. Kemble, the name and incidents of a pantomime, or any such novelty, respecting which secrecy is so essential; and in that case it would have been impossible to draw the line of difference between the two occupations. It might not have been a question much worth discussion, had the time of Mr. Kemble's retirement nearly arrived; but his appointment was gazetted the 28th of Oc-



tober, and he retired from the stage on the 23rd of December; and, owing to the great attraction caused by the announcement of his secession, I have reason to believe that an application was made to the King to allow him, in his office of examiner, an extension of time to which, on entering upon its duties, his performances on the stage had been limited. Although his Majesty very justly withheld any such permission, Mr. Kemble was full two months a performer at, and proprietor of, Covent Garden Theatre, and subsequently a large proprietor, while, as examiner of plays, he was in possession of all the movements of Drury Lane Theatre. My determination not to give up the point led to a private conference between Mr. Martins and myself, at which I pointed out the strong objections I entertained, founded on no feelings of disrespect to the Lord Chamberlain, but on those of safety to myself. I reduced this statement to writing, at Mr. Martins' request, and on his promise to submit it to the Lord Chamberlain, to meet whom he was then going to Brighton; and from which place he despatched a demi-official reply to the memorandums (for they were nothing more) I put into his hands at this interview:

“The Pavilion, Brighton,

“December 31, 1836.

“SIR,

“I felt it due to you to forward immediately to  
“the Lord Chamberlain the memorandum you put

“ into my hands on Thursday last ; and I am directed  
“ by his lordship to assure you, that he fully appreci-  
“ ciates the expressions of respect for his authority  
“ it contains, and will consider your compliance with  
“ the established regulations of his department,  
“ which apply equally to all the theatres within his  
“ jurisdiction, as a proof of that disposition on your  
“ part. The Lord Chamberlain directs me to add,  
“ that he is sure you will receive every attention,  
“ as it is his desire you should, from all the officers  
“ under him with whom you may be concerned ; his  
“ lordship is at the same time totally at a loss to  
“ conceive how any examiner of plays, in the per-  
“ formance of his duties, can in any way prejudice  
“ your individual and personal interests, or the in-  
“ terests of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM MARTINS.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq., &c. &c. &c.

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.”

With the departure, however, of Mr. Kemble from the stage, the more glaring cause of my objection departed also : but even now, while I admit that a more competent or worthier officer for such place cannot be found than Mr. Charles Kemble, I very much doubt if it ought to be filled by any one having an interest, and especially a vested one, in either of the patent theatres.

Contrasted with the stipulations, elsewhere referred to, made by Sir E. Bulwer, previous to his play of the *Duchess de la Vallière* being placed in my hands, may be mentioned the conduct of Mr. Sheridan Knowles, who, at this very period of Sir Edward's play appearing at Covent Garden owing to such stipulations, obliged me with an invitation to a family dinner, expressly to hear *his* play read, BEFORE *I made any bargain for it!* But with so justly celebrated a man as Knowles, this mark of confidence, however complimentary, was barely necessary—still he not only paid me the courtesy, but cheerfully made some trifling alterations I took the liberty of suggesting to him.

I take this opportunity of stating, that I hope my valued friend, of whose renown the public is too jealous to be willing to lose a particle of it, will pardon me for expressing the wish I felt on the occasion in question, that he would confine the exercise of his abilities to the profession of author, without ranging into that of actor. I participate in this feeling with myriads of his admirers, at the same time I can make allowances for Mr. Knowles' selection of double duty. He is a man of less vanity than most men equally gifted would be; it is not, therefore, on the score of conceit that he has taken to wear the buskin, but his discerning eye has perceived how wantonly overpaid actors are, while the finest writers in existence are comparatively neglected; and if, with large claims

upon the energies of his mind, he can, by the representation of some of its creations, make more money than he can by the creations themselves, he is probably justified in passing by the mere wish of his admirers, in providing for the proper support of "the ties of the heart." The play in question was entitled *The Wrecker's Daughter*, and its production was attended with unqualified success; but the character sustained by Mr. Knowles ought to have been sustained by Mr. Forrest. The latter gentleman probably felt justified in refusing a character which was not rendered so prominent by the author as the part of the heroine. Yet, considering the public favour extended to Mr. Forrest, also that the play was the production of the first dramatist of the times we live in, and that the part itself was the leading male one, I think my friend Forrest should have lent its performance the aid of his powerful talent. Here, again now, let the croakers for legitimacy take a lesson from the public, instead of trying to teach them one. *The Wrecker's Daughter* is a beautiful composition, carried through and wrought up with great dramatic effect: the reputation of its author is guarantee for as much, without the addition of my feeble eulogy; but *certes* it would have been played to empty benches, had it not received timely relief, soon after its production, from the performance of the admirable ballet of *Le Diable Boiteux*, rendered popular by Mademoiselle Duvernay's lascivious *Cachouca* dance. Although it may be

said of this charming dancer what was said of the elder Vestris, " Ces gens-là prouvent bien qu'ils ont l'esprit aux talons ;" yet I suspect it will not be admitted by the legitimatists, that her attraction ought to have surpassed that of any work proceeding from the pen of Mr. Knowles. I do not think it ought ; but here comes the great question—because there chanced to be a first-rate dancer in a ballet of action, it possessed greater allurements for the public than a noble drama, written by our first dramatist, owing to the want of a first-rate actor in it. This is a second edition of what " my learned friend " Serjeant Talfourd styled " Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative ;" but it has ever been so, and will be, unto the end of time.

The public at this time had enough for their money ; for although the admission was seven shillings, we gave them Mr. Forrest and a new tragedy ; Mademoiselle Duvernay and a new ballet ; *The Siege of Corinth*, with Rossini's music, and the groundwork of Lord Byron's poem, and the whole operative force of the theatre ; one scene of which, *Corinth from the Acropolis*, wherein was given that exquisite apostrophe,

" There is a light cloud by the moon—

"Tis passing, and will pass full soon," &c.

was worth any reasonable price of admission to gaze upon. But the maggot in Mr. Bull's head was biting in another direction, for I should think that the receipts to any one of the concluding performances of

Mr. Charles Kemble doubled ours to all the attractions we could put before the town. Here comes the question of the public dramatic *animus* again, and here again the view I have taken upon that point is fully borne out; the people flocked (as they ought on this particular occasion) to an individual performance, but they kept away (as they ought *not* to have done) from an admirable *tout ensemble*.

Another innovation on the patent rights of Drury Lane and Covent Garden was sanctioned at this time, and introduced under their very noses—the Italian Opera Buffa. The proprietors of these theatres considered this fresh inroad in their very neighbourhood as a great grievance; and taking into consideration the many others they have been oppressed by, they were justified in such conclusion; but, speaking merely as the *quondam* manager of their property, I do not conceive the slightest injury was sustained by these performances. They were conducted with great spirit and propriety by Mr. Mitchell, and were of that nature which was not likely to draw into the vortex of their exchequer much chance money, being principally dependent on the caprice of subscription.

I chronicle this period with much regret; not at all on account of a serious accident I met with at the time, but from a more serious loss the public met with, in the death of the individual I had been visiting, when the said accident happened. I had

known and respected Grimaldi in private life for many years, and followed the world's wake in admiration of his public talents. Four seasons preceding the one now referred to, Grimaldi applied to me to procure an engagement for the son who had caused him so much sorrow; but (being as lost to the stage as he was to his family) a compliance with his wish was utterly impracticable. I made a bold push for the services of the father, which turned out equally so, as will be manifested on a perusal of his letter. And who is there would not like to see an epistle from the illustrious JOE, descriptive of his shattered state in his latter days? Mark the apprehensions of the old war-horse, should he again hear the sound of the trumpet's battle-blast!

“ Monday, Oct. 8, 1832.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Being out of London, I did not receive yours  
“ till Thursday last; consequently could not answer  
“ it till the present moment. I sincerely regret that  
“ nothing can be done for my son, as I am confident  
“ you would find him a valuable acquisition in  
“ every department. Salary, as I previously stated,  
“ would be a secondary consideration, as a permanent  
“ situation is all that is required. An article  
“ perhaps of three or five years might still (*by your*  
“ *kind interference*) not be objected to, commencing at  
“ 3*l.* per week. Should an opportunity present it-

“ self, I hope and trust you will interest yourself in  
“ his behalf, for the sake of *Old Joe* and *auld lang*  
“ *syne*. With regard to myself, I cannot express  
“ myself in terms sufficiently to return you my sin-  
“ cere thanks for the good opinion you still have of  
“ me, and of my poor humble abilities. It is cer-  
“ tainly a great consolation to know, in my solace,  
“ that I am as much respected and esteemed in my  
“ retirement as when in my public character. Your  
“ kind offer to me to superintend the forthcoming  
“ pantomime (*however gratifying to my feelings*) I  
“ shall never forget, but must decline. I could no  
“ more sit in an arm-chair to instruct a pantomime,  
“ than I am capable of jumping out of a garret  
“ window without injuring myself—for this reason,  
“ should anything go contrary to my wishes, all ail-  
“ ments would for a moment vanish ; for I must  
“ exert myself, which in all probability might end  
“ in a bed of sickness, and might terminate my  
“ existence. All that I can offer is this,—I have as  
“ many models and tricks as would furnish six  
“ or seven pantomimes, of which you may select what  
“ is necessary for your *Xmas novelty*. Independent  
“ of which, I have a good opening, which you may  
“ inspect, and also can upon a pinch assist you with  
“ a comic scene or two of business, if required. This  
“ I can promise without *fee or reward*, provided an  
“ arrangement can be made for my son. I have  
“ quitted London entirely, where, if you answer this,



“ or may have occasion so to do, address No. 6,  
“ Prospect Row, Woolwich, Kent, near the Royal  
“ Dock Yard; where, should time or opportunity  
“ occur, nothing would give me greater pleasure  
“ than seeing you.

“ I remain

“ Yours sincerely,

“ J. GRIMALDI.

“ To Alfred Bunn, Esq.”

With a full recollection of the offer contained in this communication, I rode up on horseback to Grimaldi's house in Southampton-street, Pentonville, where I had a pleasant interview with the battered veteran. He opened his casket of pantomimic wonders; and after explaining any mystery I was unacquainted with, presented me with the treasure. I put three or four very small models in my hat, and the box containing the others he courteously sent after me to the theatre. I was walking my horse down Pentonville-hill, the reins hanging loosely from the mane, and was adjusting poor Joe's mementos, which were extremely inconveniencing my *caput*, when a rascally urchin, who intended no doubt to throw a stone at his play-fellow, instead of so doing cut my horse's eye,\*

\* The lad ran away, for fear of what lads call a licking. But to show the difference of character in different countries, I venture to mention an anecdote of another lad, who, under nearly similar circumstances, did *not* run away. In 1822 I was walking arm-in-arm

which caused him instantly to rear up, and to deposit my *corpus* on the pommel of the saddle. The contusion was a severe one, and with difficulty I mustered strength enough to ride on to the theatre, where I was laid up for the following fortnight. That was however a trifling affair, and distressed poor JOE far more than it did me, and his mind only obtained complete relief on hearing of the success of our pantomime. Two days before its production I received from him the last few lines I did receive, and that probably he ever wrote, and as such I give them a place. Much cannot be said in praise of their poetical merits, but they possess enough of sounder stuff to show that his heart was still in the cause in which he had, through years of untired efforts, so industriously and so successfully laboured :

“ 33, Southampton street, Pentonville,

“ December 24, 1836.

“ My dear Alfred Bunn,

“ To you I cannot come—

“ But depend upon seeing me soon ;

“ I have taken a pill,

“ Which remains with me still,

“ Which confines me to-day to my room.

with Mr. Beazley past Trinity College, Dublin, when a youthful Hibernian, in aiming a stone at one of his companions, very nearly hit Beazley in the eye. The boy, without betraying a symptom of apprehension, or even dreaming of making a retreat, pulled up what little slack his nether garments could boast of, and passing him by, archly remarked, “ Your eye was well out of that.”

"Soon will come Monday ;  
 "Let me hear from you Tuesday :"  
 "Till that time shall feel in distress:  
 "May your efforts applauded  
 "Be amply rewarded,  
 "And your troubles be crown'd with success.

"Your's sincerely,  
 "JOE GRIMALDI."

Our recollections of, and associations with, Christmas, and consequently of, and with, Grimaldi, are amongst the earliest and happiest of our thoughts. We can never forget our burst of enjoyment on

\* The rhythm here is lost sight of, but greater poets than poor JOE have been at a loss, before now, for rhyme, as shall be shown. Dr. Fitzgerald, of the Dublin College, wrote a poem entitled the *Academic Sportsman*, descriptive of the travels of a student in the recess; and, in apostrophising a village called *Tipperary*, he uses this couplet :

"And thee, dear village, loveliest of the clime,  
 "Fain would I name thee, but I can't, in rhyme !"

In addition to his other labours, the doctor announced his discovery of a planet to rival the *Georgium Sidus*, and the Trinity boys christened it *Anser*. The two effusions of the doctor's genius drew forth the following remarks :

"A Goose there was in sad quandary  
 To end his rhyme with Tipperary :  
 Long laboured he through January,  
 But all in vain for Tipperary—  
 Toiled THIRTY DAYS\* in February,  
 But toiled in vain for Tipperary !

\* Tough work this, when you work so hard as to make a month contain an additional day.

catching the first accents of that many-toned voice, and the first glimpse of that party-coloured face, when, year after year, we have squeezed into any part of the theatre his attraction had left standing room in. Has there been any social happiness of after days, the memory of which can impart such true delight, as a recurrence to those green and bright hours of life's unclouded boyhood? Oh, no—the conflict of manhood and the effort of age are but vain and fruitless struggles, from which the mind too often recoils, to revel in the retrospect of long-departed pleasures. Grimaldi's death soon followed the scene I have alluded to, having occurred on the thirty-first of May, 1837. Colman,

Exploring Bailey's dictionary,  
 He found no rhyme for Tipperary :  
 Searched Hebrew text, and commentary,  
 But searched in vain for Tipperary ;  
 For still the verse would run contrary,  
 Whene'er he turned to Tipperary ;  
 The stubborn verse he ne'er could vary  
 To that unlucky Tipperary !  
 Consulting, then, his mother Mary,\*  
 She knew no rhyme for Tipperary ;  
 Searched every pan within her dairy,  
 No pan presented Tipperary !  
 He then invoked the aid of fairy,  
 But vainly prayed for Tipperary :  
 At length he searched the Zodiac airy  
 And ANSWER cackled Tipperary !"

\* *Nota bene*, his mother Mary  
 Kept a dairy in Tipperary !

and Bannister, and Grimaldi! Well hath the rival  
of the Teian bard sung :

“ We are fallen upon evil days,  
Star after star decays.”

Good-night, old fellow! The voluptuary of by-gone times, who offered a reward for any new gratification, would much more gladly have paid it for the restoration of many an old one, had he only known thee. But to the busy world again.

A few days after the introduction of our pantomime at Drury Lane Theatre, a play in five acts, entitled the “ *Duchess de la Vallière*,” written by the author of “ *Eugene Aram*,” “ *The Last Days of Pompeii*,” &c., was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, and to the published copies of that work is prefixed an “ advertisement” from which the following is an extract :

“ This play (with the above preface) was written  
“ in the autumn and winter of 1835. It was sub-  
“ mitted to no other opinion than that of Mr.  
“ Macready, with whom the author had the honour  
“ of a personal acquaintance ; and who, on perusal,  
“ was obligingly anxious for its performance at  
“ Drury Lane. The manager of that theatre  
“ wished, naturally perhaps, to see the manuscript  
“ before he hazarded the play ; the author (perhaps  
“ no less naturally) declined a condition from a  
“ manager, which was precisely of that nature which  
“ no author, of moderate pretensions, concedes to a

“ publisher. A writer can have but little self-respect, who does not imagine, in any new experiment in literature, that no risk can be greater than his own.”

The writer of this precious piece of modesty, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, not having condescended to mention the cognomen of the particular manager herein alluded to, notwithstanding that in another part of the said advertisement he ostentatiously parades the names of two others, who “ at once ” and “ liberally ” acceded to his conditions, it becomes the duty of the delinquent, who could do such an audacious thing as to refuse to pay a sum of money for a piece of which he had never read a line, to proclaim himself. It was stipulated, at the time the subject was first introduced, that the transaction should be kept secret, and by me that stipulation, nonsensical as it appeared, was inviolably maintained ; but Mr. Bulwer having thought proper to dissolve the spell, and unveil such an important mystery, there can be no possible reason why I should not follow the example he has set.

In the beginning of March, this said year of 1836, Mr. Macready came into my room, and with a self-satisfied smile said,

“ What will you give for a first-rate play by a first-rate man ? ”

“ A first-rate price,” said I ; “ and who’s your friend ? ”

"I am not at liberty to mention names," answered he.

"Then send me the piece, and you shall have my answer in four-and-twenty hours," said I.

"I do not think the author will do that," rejoined he.

"Pray, have *you* read it?" inquired Pilgarlick.

"I have, and think very highly of it," answered he.

"Well, doctors, you know, may differ; and I should like to know upon what grounds I, who have all the risk to run, am to be deprived of the same opportunity of judging accorded to you, who are a comparative cipher in the affair," said I.

"Well, well, I understand you are free then to receive the play, and I will therefore see the author, try and get his permission to mention his name, and give you some idea of his terms," ejaculated Mr. Macready, and out he went.

The following day brought another interview, at which Mr. Macready conveyed to me the important intelligence that the author was no less a personage than *Edward Lytton Bulwer*; that he required a considerable sum to be paid down on the delivery of the manuscript, and that the communication was to be considered altogether private! I took the liberty of saying, that although Mr. Bulwer might be considered a first-rate novelist, he could not possibly be considered a first-rate dramatist, and that I declined making any such blind bargain. We parted on the understanding that I should write my sentiments

on the business part of this interview to Mr. Bulwer, which I instantly did, to which I received the following reply :—

“ Albany, March 7, 1836.

“ SIR,

“ Before I reply to the more business part of  
“ your letter, allow me to set both parties right with  
“ regard to a seeming misunderstanding. *I made*  
“ no communications. I rather imagine I was the  
“ person who *received* them. I had an offer from  
“ another theatre. Previous to my decision, I felt  
“ obliged (according to an old promise) to show the  
“ play to Mr. Macready, and *in some measure to*  
“ *allow him the first choice!* Mr. Macready pro-  
“ fessed himself so much pleased with the play, that  
“ he wrote me word he would speak to you, con-  
“ cealing my name. He afterwards called on me  
“ and made certain propositions, which I considered  
“ fair and liberal, but which I was obliged to mo-  
“ dify in some instances, viz. to limit the copyright  
“ to the theatre to three years, and to require a cer-  
“ tain portion of the money on giving the MS.,  
“ though perfectly willing, should the play fail of an  
“ adequate run, to return it.

“ With regard to showing the MS. to you, sir,  
“ in your capacity of manager, while I allow it quite  
“ natural in you to wish *to see the play before you*  
“ *produce it!* yet, having in no instance since my  
“ first publication, allowed the purchaser to inspect



“ any work of mine in MS., having always found  
“ such reputation as I may possess a sufficient gua-  
“ rantee for its contents ; so, on the other hand, it  
“ is natural for me not to depart from a rule hither-  
“ to carefully maintained on one side, and cheer-  
“ fully complied with on the other. Nor can it be  
“ from any want of respect for your judgment, or  
“ deficiency in courtesy to yourself, that I am com-  
“ pelled to adhere to this maxim ! Had I the plea-  
“ sure of your personal acquaintance, *and had you*  
“ *not been the manager of the theatre !* I might na-  
“ turally have wished to benefit from the sugges-  
“ tions of a longer dramatic experience than my  
“ own.

“ I fear, as it is, that our difference upon this  
“ point will constitute an insuperable objection to  
“ arrangements between us, unless any middle  
“ course could be suggested, which is only likely to  
“ arise from a personal interview on the matter. At  
“ present I shall take leave to consider the nego-  
“ tiation begun by Mr. Macready at an end ; and  
“ have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ E. L. BULWER.

“ P. S.—When I consented to the request of Mr.  
“ Macready to mention to you my name, I did so  
“ on the understanding, which, no doubt, he com-  
“ municated to you, that it was a strictly private and  
“ confidential communication.”

The one great point of requiring me to buy what the profane call a *pig in a poke*, not being conceded, the matter, after a letter or two more, dropped.

I have taken the liberty of marking in italics some particular passages in the preceding letter, as requiring particular notice. Mr. Bulwer says, he felt obliged to offer Mr. Macready, *in some measure, the first choice* of his play—an admission which, considering Mr. Macready was not the manager of any theatre at the time, and not, therefore, in a situation to produce it, carries a very droll sort of obligation along with it. Mr. Bulwer further says, “*it is quite natural in you to wish to see the play before you produce it.*” (N.B.—It would puzzle the devil himself to produce it, unless he *could* see it!) And finally says, that “*had I not been the manager of the theatre, I should have read it!*” I must confess, this beats all the logic I ever listened to, hollow. An actor brings his manager a play which, in his opinion, (actors are invariably bad judges of the general effects of a piece, and this actor as bad as the rest, because they think only of their own part in it,) is a very fine one, requires a sum of money for it before the MS. can be given up, and is strictly prohibited from telling the author's name! To comply with such preposterous expectations, would be to admit that the actor was a first-rate judge, the author an eminent dramatist, and the manager an irredeemable fool. I looked upon the first lunge made at me as savouring very strongly

of conceit or humbug ; nor was the impression altogether removed, on learning that the author, whose pretensions I had questioned, bore the redoubtable name of *Edward Lytton Bulwer*. Recollecting that our greatest living dramatist, Knowles, had invariably done me the honour to read to me, or allow me to read, any piece of his before we struck a bargain, I considered the exactions of an untried dramatist bordering somewhat on the burlesque. Nor do the arguments in Mr. Bulwer's letter, nor his advertisement, at all justify his demand, inasmuch as there is a vast difference between the positions of a manager and a publisher. Mr. Bulwer being a popular novelist, there are few bibliopolists who would not, on the strength of his name, purchase any stated work in preparation by him before it was completed. There are sufficient admirers of his peculiar style, amongst the reading class of the community, to warrant a return of their speculation ; and a publisher, having but that portion of the public to deal with, may rely on realising a profit. It is a very different thing with a manager ; for, after satisfying *his own* judgment, he has, to a certain extent, to succumb to that of the performers, to pass the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain, the perilous ordeal of a mixed and multipotent audience, the equally formidable decision of the press, and a variety of other " ills " that (theatrical) " flesh is heir to," before any prospect can present itself of repaying the outlay such a piece entails. Now, look at the result of all this

swagger on the one side, and common prudence on the other. *The Duchess de la Vallière* was received on the first night of its performance with that fallacious hubbub the *claqueurs* of a party can always create ; but it was considered, dramatically speaking, a failure, and was a positive loss to the treasury of the theatre. It would be an insult to an English audience to suppose it would have been otherwise ; for a work of more offensive construction, and in some respects impious language, was never submitted to their decision. About the period of its preparation, the reader and examiner of plays, the ever-regarded and regretted George Colman,\* was on his

\* This reference to the severity which distinguished Mr. Colman's censorship, when contrasted with the license evinced in his own works before he was examiner of plays, is naturally subject to animadversion. I once went with Elliston in the hope of persuading him to remove some objections he had made to parts of a play, as bordering on the profane, but he was immovable. "And now," said he, rubbing his hands, "let us go into the next room and have a glass of wine." We did so ; and in the course of conversation he inquired after his former partner in the Haymarket Theatre, and his wife.

"His wife is dying, I fear," said Elliston.

"Dying ! bless my soul, I'm sorry for that—let me see, if I recollect rightly, she was his servant ?" observed the censor.

"I have heard so," responded the lessee.

"Then I hope," said Colman, "she'll carry a *good character* to her NEXT PLACE!!!" It might seem strange that the profaneness of a play should be questioned by one who could make this remark ; but he has frequently said to me, that there was a vast difference between the fulfilment of a public duty to which he was bound by oath, and which might influence the opinions of all classes of people, and mere chit-chat with a private friend.

deathbed, or he never would have sanctioned such exclamations as the following, put into the mouth, be it remembered, not of a confirmed dignitary of the Church, but of a soldier, a stranger to its purity, yet assuming its garb and language :

“ The Pharisees

“ Had priests that gave their SAVIOUR *to the cross !*”

Again,

“ And seek some aleek Iscariot of the church,

‘ *To sell SALVATION for the thirty pieces !*”

And,

“ My heart's wild sea is hush'd, and o'er the waves

“ *The SAVIOUR walks !*”

It was considered, and so it was chronicled, and set down by the party of which Mr. Bulwer is the nucleus, that I had committed an unpardonable offence, in treating with such apparent contempt their illustrious Coryphæus. I should be very sorry if any impression, arising out of these observations, went abroad, that I sought to depreciate, in a general point of view, Mr. Bulwer's great abilities. Such is not the case. I have been repeatedly charmed by a perusal of some of his works of fiction ; but I have found no reason, from the subsequent works he has produced on the stage, to alter the opinion I had formed, from witnessing and reading the *Duchess de la Vallière*, that his mind is not theatrically constituted. His plays may be crammed

down the throats of a probationary audience by the expedients resorted to on such occasions—a liberal issue of “*orders*,” a judicious disposal of the “*Sons of Freedom*,” the smirking of a *soi-disant* fashionable party located in a private box, with its blushing author sitting in its centre, and other such prepared quackery; but they will never hold permanent rank in the dramatic literature of the country.

It will probably be alleged as a set-off to the exorbitancy of Mr. Bulwer's demand of payment in advance, that he was perfectly willing, “should the play fail of an adequate run, to return it.” Most other authors, and those of far greater repute than Mr. Bulwer ever will be, have been content to receive their money in proportion to, and even after, the adequate run of their piece; added to which, we must remember, without at all impeaching Mr. Bulwer's good intentions, the old proverb saith, that the worst paymaster on earth, save he who never pays, is he who pays beforehand. I have adopted, without offence I hope, the nomenclature of *Mister* Bulwer, because the learned gentleman, at the time I speak of, had not written himself into the dignity of a BARONET!!

Having slightly alluded to the circumstance of my examination before the commissioners appointed by his late Majesty to inquire into the fees, &c. of the officers on the civil list establishment, I subjoin a copy of the summons which led to the same:

“ SIR,

“ I am desired by the commissioners appointed  
“ by his Majesty for inquiring into the fees and  
“ emoluments of every officer on the civil list es-  
“ tablishment, to request that you will do them the  
“ favour to attend them at their office, on Monday  
“ next the 27th instant, at twelve o'clock in the  
“ afternoon, for the purpose of affording to the com-  
“ missioners such information as your experience  
“ will enable you to do, upon the subject of the fees  
“ now demanded and received by certain officers  
“ connected with his Majesty's household, upon  
“ licenses issued by the Lord Chamberlain, au-  
“ thorizing the representation of new theatrical en-  
“ tertainments, &c.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ RICH. HANKINS, Sec.

“ Office of Inquiry,

“ St. James's Palace,

“ June 24, 1838.”

(Adjoining the Board of Green Cloth.)

The report made to his Majesty by the Marquis Conyngham, the Earl of Albemarle, and Mr. Baring, bears date the 28th of December 1836, and was printed by the King's commands shortly afterwards. It contains so important a record of the past and present state of the case, that it would be losing an important document to omit it. The first report is relative to

“ FEES ON THEATRICAL PATENTS AND LICENSES.

“ These fees appear to have existed for more than  
 “ fifty years, and are payable to certain officers in  
 “ the Lord Chamberlain’s department, by the parties  
 “ to whom the patents or licenses are granted.

“ In the year 1835 they appear to have realised  
 “ to Mr. Mash, 116*l.* 2*s.* ; to Mr. Martins, 45*l.* 9*s.* ;  
 “ and to the office porter, about 5*l.* The fees con-  
 “ sist of the following particulars, viz.

	Fees upon a Patent for a Theatre.*			Fees upon a License for the Season.			Fees upon a License for all limited number of Nights.			Fees upon a License for one Night.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
T. B. Mash, Esq., as Comptroller	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
as Secretary	3	17	6	10	15	0	3	4	6	1	1	6
W. Martins, Esq., as Clerk	1	18	9	2	13	0	2	1	0	1	6	0
Assistant Clerks for entering the Patent	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Office Porter . . .	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	2	6
Total	28	1	3	13	13	0	5	10	6	2	10	0

“ We are not prepared to recommend that these  
 “ should be at once abolished, but that for the pre-  
 “ sent they should be continued and carried to the  
 “ account of the fee-fund ; and that the officers now  
 “ in the enjoyment of them should be compensated  
 “ upon the same principle and in the same manner  
 “ as we have already suggested to your Majesty in  
 “ respect of the fees of honour, and no successors to  
 “ the present holders should be allowed to receive  
 “ them, or derive any benefit therefrom.

\* If two or more persons are named in the patent, each party is charged with the fees.



“ Looking, however, to the nature of these fees,  
“ we trust that the accumulation of the fee-fund will  
“ admit, before long, of their reduction and ultimate  
“ abolition, particularly with reference to the fees  
“ on swearing in officers and tradesmen, and upon  
“ theatrical licenses ; inasmuch as, in the first case,  
“ a heavy charge by way of fee is likewise imposed  
“ upon the same parties for their warrants of ap-  
“ pointment ; and, in the second case, the fees now  
“ charged upon theatrical or musical licenses for one  
“ night, or for a limited number of nights, appear  
“ to us to bear hardly upon the individuals to whom  
“ such licenses are granted.

“ We have also had under our notice an annuity  
“ granted long ago by the theatre of Drury Lane  
“ to Mr. Mash of the Lord Chamberlain’s office.  
“ The whole circumstances of the transaction are  
“ detailed in the evidence taken before the com-  
“ mittee of the House of Commons on dramatic  
“ literature, in the year 1832. Mr. Mash has re-  
“ ceived nothing under the annuity since the be-  
“ ginning of the year 1836, and an intimation has  
“ been given to him that no further instalment will  
“ be paid.

“ The payment has ceased ; Mr. Mash is about to  
“ retire from your Majesty’s service, and the regula-  
“ tions we propose will prevent any such transaction  
“ for the future.”

And this report is immediately followed by another relative to

“ FEE ON LICENSING THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

“ This is a fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* for every play, song, or  
“ other theatrical entertainment licensed under the  
“ provisions of the Act of the 10th George II., c. 28,  
“ by the Lord Chamberlain, previously to public  
“ representation. It is payable by the managers of  
“ the several theatres within the jurisdiction of the  
“ Lord Chamberlain, to the examiner of theatrical  
“ entertainments, and produced in the year 1835 the  
“ sum of 291*l.* 18*s.*

“ The payment of this fee appears to have existed  
“ for nearly a century ; and it was stated to us by  
“ the late Mr. Colman, that although he considered  
“ himself clearly entitled to the fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* for  
“ every song or short piece licensed, as well as for  
“ every play however long, yet in practice he had  
“ sometimes only charged one fee upon several new  
“ songs licensed upon the occasion of a performer's  
“ benefit, and had relinquished his fee altogether in  
“ some special cases.

“ The fee is not charged for a song which is  
“ written in, and forms part of any play or opera ;  
“ nor is it paid in cases where the license is refused  
“ by the Lord Chamberlain.

“ We are of opinion that fees of this nature may  
“ with propriety be continued, provided their  
“ amount is commensurate with the labour and re-  
“ sponsibility cast upon the examiner, and not, as at  
“ present, remaining an unvarying fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* upon  
“ every occasion, whether the new production be

“ short or long—a system which, in its operation,  
 “ presses unduly and heavily upon the managers of  
 “ those theatres at which new pieces of one and two  
 “ acts are frequently produced under the sanction  
 “ of the Lord Chancellor’s license. In this view of  
 “ the subject we are fully borne out by the opinion  
 “ of the Select Committee of the House of Commons  
 “ on dramatic literature, whose report to that House,  
 “ in the month of July 1832, upon the subject of  
 “ the fees on licenses, was as follows : ‘ Your Com-  
 “ ‘ mittee would recommend some revision in the  
 “ ‘ present system of fees to the censor, so (for in-  
 “ ‘ stance) that the license of a song, and the license  
 “ ‘ of a play, may not be indiscriminately subject to  
 “ ‘ the same charge.’

“ Having fully considered this subject, we are in-  
 “ duced to recommend to your Majesty’s considera-  
 “ tion, that the following would be a fair and proper  
 “ scale of fees, to be in future payable to the ex-  
 “ aminer upon licensing all theatrical entertain-  
 “ ments, namely—

“ For a License for every Dramatic piece of three or more		
“ acts	.	£2 0 0
“ For a License for every Dramatic piece of one or two		
“ acts, or for a Pantomime containing prose or poetry	.	1 0 0
“ For a License for a Song, Address, Prologue, or		
“ Epilogue	.	0 5 0

“ The death of Mr. Colman having caused a va-  
 “ cancy in the appointment of examiner, the Lord  
 “ Chamberlain has stated that his successor has been

“ appointed, with a distinct understanding that the  
“ scale of fees would be subject to revision. We  
“ consider that the scale proposed by us will afford  
“ a fair and adequate remuneration for the office,  
“ provided the salary now payable to the examiner  
“ of plays under your Majesty’s warrant is increased  
“ to the extent of about 50*l.* per annum.”

These extracts will serve as a guide for any distressed manager to know how to steer in cases of doubt or difficulty; they will show what *has* been paid, and what is, at least for the present, expected to be paid: the most important part of the business after all, because he can then easily ascertain what “ extracts ” will be made from his own unfortunate pocket.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Seven shillings and four shillings *versus* cleanliness and dirt; scale of both—Reform dinner—Interpretation of initials—Mr. C. Kemble and Washington Irving—Mr. Mathews and the tooth-pick—Contrast between the American and British stage—Dollars and pounds—Fair Rosamond and *unfair* treatment—Wide distinction between a good pleader and a bad judge—Petition to Parliament—Mr. Duncombe and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—An execution, and if possible a worse case of suspense—A den of thieves and a house of prayer—French actresses—How to engage them—A Clarendon dinner, and a jewel of a desert—The result of all dealings with women.

My humble opinion upon the question of lowering the prices of the two patent theatres has been slightly disposed of in a preceding part of this work: but as we are now arrived at that particular juncture when the reduction, previously carried into effect at Covent Garden, compelled its adoption at Drury Lane, it is necessary to enter into it more minutely. Notwithstanding the attractions previously enumerated, and nightly exhibiting at the latter house, we were literally beaten clean out of the field in receipt—for although to a very successful pantomime were superadded the new ballet (Du-

vernay deemed a host in herself) and other popular amusements, yet the grand consideration *to a family at this time of the year* (because they MUST take their children) lay between *seven* shillings and *four* shillings admission to the boxes. When it was beyond dispute that two children might go to that house for nearly the same sum as was asked for ONE at this house, and when it was taken into calculation that which all the said children wanted to see was the pantomime, it was obvious that parents would select the cheaper establishment, without reference to any other of the peculiar comforts to be enjoyed at the dearer one. It was evident, by the difference of attendance at the two theatres at this period, that although a clean and beautifully decorated house was pleasant to look at, and delightful to sit in, yet if nearly double the price was to be paid for the advantage, people preferred accommodation in one dirty and with doubtful decorations. The actors seeing this, and foreseeing that a continuance in the struggle to support legitimacy, or even decency, would probably end in a premature closing of the theatre, or a suspension of the pay list, besieged me with petitions to pocket my dignity, for the sake of pocketing something more substantial. Had I been a man of fortune, I would have seen them regularly — paid, first; but that not being the case, there appeared to be no alternative. The old prices were, therefore, only continued up to Saturday, December 31, 1836, on

which evening, with a sigh for departed glory, I left the theatre with the feelings I presume a person to have who has done an action of which he is ashamed. The veriest cur who sneaks away with his tail between his legs, from the lash of the whip that has just clung round his loins, never cut a more contemptible figure in his own eyes. I never troubled myself about what others thought. My own mortification was quite enough to contend with. "The light of other days" was "faded" indeed, and I cursed the song, and myself for having written it. True it is, that the theatre which, until the said 31st, had been a comparative desert, was now crowded to the roof, and the wiseacres who urged me on, *malgré moi*, to this desecration, imagined that a splendid fortune would be speedily realised. The result was precisely what I anticipated—many more people came to the theatre, but its treasury was not the gainer. The lowering of the prices did not make one proselyte. It only induced some who at the former price came but once, now to come twice; and the property was therefore *minus* in respectability and income. On the principle, however, laid down by that high authority in figures, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, let us submit to the examination of the reader a return of the first week of this innovation, (by some degrees the best week,) and compare it with the corresponding week of the year *before* at the old prices, and with the same week of the year *after*, at the present prices :

# RECEIPTS OF DRURY LANE THEATRE

For the first week in January, during three successive seasons, showing the fluctuation of such receipt, according to the altered scale of admission, in each season :

JANUARY 1836.			JANUARY 1837.			JANUARY 1838.		
PRICES OF ADMISSION.			PRICES OF ADMISSION.			PRICES OF ADMISSION.		
Boxes 7s.—Pit 3s. 6d.—First Gallery 2s.— —Upper Gallery 1s.			Boxes 4s.—Pit 2s.—Galleries 1s.			Boxes 5s.—Pit 3s.—First Gallery 2s.— Upper Gallery 1s.		
Monday, January 4	£	s. d.	Monday, January 2	£	s. d.	Monday, January 1	£	s. d.
Tuesday, January 5	299	6 0	Tuesday, January 3	209	19 0	Tuesday, January 2	254	13 6
Wednesday, January 6	287	17 0	Wednesday, January 4	244	12 0	Wednesday, January 3	242	7 6
Thursday, January 7	255	16 6	Thursday, January 5	228	14 0	Thursday, January 4	278	5 0
Friday, January 8	270	13 6	Friday, January 6	209	6 6	Friday, January 5	253	11 0
Saturday, January 9	242	2 6	Saturday, January 7	142	4 0	Saturday, January 6	192	3 0
	203	16 0		244	18 0		179	11 0
Week's Receipt	£1,559	11 6	Week's Receipt	£1,279	13 6	Week's Receipt	£1,400	11 0



By this comparative return, it will appear that by far the highest receipt for the week was at the seven shilling prices; the next highest was at the five shilling prices; and the lowest of all was at the four shilling prices: and to make it more conclusive, it may be as well to add, that the week's performances in January 1836 and 1838 were supported by no auxiliary aid, while that in January 1837 had the advantage of Mademoiselle Duvernay in a new ballet. If this be not a decisive answer to all future theorists in such matters, argument is entirely at an end. Facts are stubborn things: and though I very much doubt if even facts will convince a performer upon any point on which he has previously made up his mind, yet, in the hope of putting him at all events in the right path of conviction, I submit to *him* this, to *me*, conclusive document. If he wants any other argument, I'll tell him one. An eccentric person once said to me—"Lay out your money in theatres, sir? Pooh! nonsense—lay it out in pigs, "and then you will at least *get a squeak for it!*"

I was particularly abused at this time for having let Drury Lane Theatre to the Reformers of Middlesex, to enable them to give a dinner to their representatives, Messrs. Byng and Hume: but as the doing so enabled me (after paying every attendant expense, and the dramatic company the salaries they would have been entitled to, had the theatre been open for its ordinary purposes) to contribute £200 to a treasury groaning under the weight of —

bills, not cash—the abuse had no remarkable effect. The upholders of the legitimate party at the other theatre thought it a positive outrage to suffer any such commemoration to take place in one of Shakspeare's temples. I thought so too; still “the art of our necessities is strange,” and we are compelled, much oftener than we like, to do things that go very much against our dispositions. But if it were deemed profane, in Shakspearian eyes, in *me* thus to desecrate the house, what must have been thought by them of “Shakspeare's representative,” who in a subsequent season, when he came into the management of the rival house, literally consented to commit the same atrocity? I cannot exactly state what they THOUGHT, but I can what they SAID. Why, the very blackguards who had so measurelessly pummelled me for MY ACT, applauded Mr. Macready to the skies for *his*. “It is a mad world; my masters!” and no mistake.

I don't enter into political discussions, but I enjoy a good laugh at the donkeys that do; and there are some people into whose “marrow, bones, and all,” politics eat; and amongst these may fairly be classed your republicans and reformers. I was travelling some years since with Mr. Charles Kemble from Bath, and, during the struggle between the dappled grey of morning and full daylight, two persons entered the coach, and entered into our conversation. Until they did so, we conceived them to be ordinary countrymen; but when, in reply to a

question Kemble put to me respecting Washington Irving's Sketch-Book, I remarked how admirably he had dilated on the fine sight presented to the eye of an American on his first nearing the shores of Albion, "guarded by her ships of war, that prowled like guardian giants along the coast," one of them instantly rejoined, "It's a much finer sight on approaching the shores of America, where no such guardian giants are necessary," our opinion was somewhat altered. We expected them to be a brace of republicans by this remark, and became convinced of it by the ensuing observation. "How extra loyal some of your countrymen are," said Jonathan to Charles Kemble, who bowed with silent dignity. "I attended a few days ago a public dinner at Bath, and had the calamity of sitting next to a man of that quality. The chairman very properly gave THE KING. I am as willing to drink that toast, particularly in his Majesty's own country, as any one; but when the aldermannic booby, wiping his bloated cheeks, and filling his glass to the brim, ejaculated with a mouthful of highly wrought toryism, THE KING,—GOD BLESS HIM! I felt disgusted, and went to the further end of the room!!" \* At this Drury Lane dinner I was

\* Mathews did this once at a public dinner, but from a different reason. He sat opposite to a gentleman who, after using his tooth-pick, put it by the side of his plate; on seeing which, his next neighbour took it up and did the same. Mathews, horrified, said quietly, "I beg your pardon, but do you know you are using that gentleman's

accosted by some such fiery politician, though he possessed not the brains of our Bath traveller. "Pray, sir," said the Middlesex voter, seeing that I had been occupied in superintending the decorations, "Why d'ye give us those royal illuminations here?" (alluding to the letters W. R. at the back of the stage lighted with gas,) "This a'n't a king's business, it's a people's business we are come about!" Whereupon I ventured to say, "Those initials do not stand, sir, for WILLIAM REX, but for WRETCHED RADICALS;" and he, swallowing up the nonsense, replied, "Then in my opinion one's as impudent as t'other."

Well, these little diversions, these chequerings of a theatrical life, come in agreeably enough in the midst of the bad houses, the bad acting, and the bad weather, which managerial existence is apt to encounter, and bound to endure. It is pleasant to hear some bold boys proposing to bring about the salvation of their country, at all risks of endangering their own, promising to subscribe largely for the public good, without having anything to subscribe, and feasting in the halls of party, while the inmates of their household hearths are loafless:

toothpick?" "Oh! yes, yes," was the cool reply, and in a few minutes more he repeated the dirty trick; when Mathews, unable to contain himself, bellowed out, "Sir, do you know that you are using that gentleman's toothpick?" "Well, sir, suppose I am, I mean to give it him back again!" was the answer of the offended citizen.

" But 'tis the age's foppery, and the beggar  
 " Lights his last fagot for his country's glory,  
 " Forgetting, while he eyes the straw-fed blaze,  
 " He must be cold to-morrow."

The success of Mr. Forrest set his beloved country in a blaze, which lighted up the ambition of many of its histrionic aspirants, some of whom came over the waste of waters to take shelter under the wing of the tragedian's success. I have brought before an English public several American performers, and have had great pleasure in so doing: but I must confess I have done so rather with a desire to trust to their opinion of themselves, than from any impression of my own as to its correctness. Our transatlantic friends are a singular mixture of good and bad taste—good, or they would not receive with so much admiration our best talent; and bad, or they would not countenance so much of their own indifferent talent. Forrest stands quite aloof from any participation in these remarks; but, with the exception of him, scarcely an American performer has passed muster upon our stage. Cooper, one of their greatest favourites, utterly failed here under the management of their own master of the ceremonies, Mr. Price. Mr. George Jones did not fail certainly, but "he died, and made no sign." Little Hill, in a peculiar delineation, has been favourably received; and Mr. Hackett, in certain Americanisms, has been accepted; but they both have broken down in any

npt at our regular drama. Mrs. Sharpe, (I  
 "1

believe a sister of Mr. Hackett's,) is a remarkably clever woman, and sustained the weight of some Shaksperian characters with a high order of talent. But then, again, Miss Placide was "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Mr. Forrest's *protégé*, this season, was a Mr. Barrett, a man of very gentlemanly manners, and excellent in all things save his profession, but in that he was considered here, as inefficient a representative of *Puff* in the *Critic* as ever played the part. My desire to forward Mr. Barrett's views was not coincided in by the public, and with every wish therefore to advance him, I had not the power. There are few things that have caused me more uneasiness than the difficulty under which I have repeatedly laboured of not being able to place American performers in the light they wished before a London audience. It is impossible to convince them that you do not seek to crush their talent; and an attempt to persuade them that they will not be attractive is invariably answered by accounts of a fourteen hundred dollar benefit at New York, of clearing five thousand dollars at Philadelphia, of so many thousands at Boston, and of so many more in various parts of the United States. They cannot, or they will not, draw the line of distinction between the advanced degree of taste and refinement at which this country has naturally arrived, and the struggle which their own (like other countries in their infancy) is making to possess taste or refinement at all. We have had to go through the same fight ourselves, when we were

emerging from barbarism into civilisation, and our children should learn from our example, that it is impossible to become perfect at once. I have the utmost respect for the social qualities of the different American artistes whom I have met in London, to the number of whom I may add their most fortunate and popular comedian, Mr. Rice. His success has been obtained by his prudent adhesion to the personation of one class of character—a path, be it remembered, altogether untrodden. He has chosen for his motto, “It is better to be great in a little thing, than little in a great thing,” and has triumphantly acted up to the axiom.

A few days after the appearance and disappearance of Mr. Barrett, the long talked-of opera by Mr. John Barnett, entitled *Fair Rosamond*, was produced, though its production was at first in danger of being frustrated. The misunderstanding that had sprung up between the Lord Chamberlain’s office and Drury-lane was considered to be amicably adjusted by the receipt of Mr. Martins’ letter of the 31st December, already given; but in consequence of two farces (*The Yankee Pedlar* and *Hush*) having been produced during the period of the misunderstanding, without the Lord Chamberlain’s license, and without (of far more importance to the groundlings of his office than all the licenses which he ever signed) the payment of the fees, an intimation was sent to the theatre by the officials, that no further licenses would be granted to Drury Lane Theatre until the

regulations of his lordship's office were complied with. My first impression was to hurl at them all the gauntlet of defiance, strictly following the Act of Parliament (10 *Geo. II. chapter 28*,) which, while it renders it imperative on the manager to submit his new pieces to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days before their production, does not call upon the Lord Chamberlain to issue any license for the performance; it arms with an authority to prohibit, but does not require him to sanction. The "license" part of the business has been got up by the feelers of fees, and they have taken custom for right. Reader, as the gentle *Portia* says,

"Thyself shall see the act,"

or at least as much of it as is necessary for the argument we have entered upon :

"And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid,  
"That from and after the said twenty-fourth day of  
"June, 1737, it shall and may be lawful to and for  
"the said Lord Chamberlain for the time being,  
"from time to time, and when and as often as he  
"shall think fit, to prohibit the acting, performing,  
"or representing any interlude, tragedy, comedy,  
"opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the  
"stage, or any act, scene, or part thereof, or any  
"prologue or epilogue; and in case any person or  
"persons shall for hire, gain, or reward, act, perform,  
"or represent, or cause to be acted, performed, or



“ represented, any new interlude, tragedy, comedy,  
“ opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the  
“ stage, or any act, scene, or part thereof, or  
“ any new prologue or epilogue, before a copy  
“ thereof shall be sent as aforesaid, with such  
“ account as aforesaid ; or shall, for hire, gain, or  
“ reward, act, perform, or represent, or cause to be  
“ acted, performed, or represented, any interlude,  
“ tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other  
“ entertainment of the stage, or any act, scene, or  
“ part thereof, or any prologue or epilogue, con-  
“ trary to such prohibition as aforesaid ; every per-  
“ son so offending shall, for every such offence, forfeit  
“ the sum of fifty pounds, and every grant, license,  
“ and authority (in case there be any such) by or un-  
“ der which the said master or masters, or manager  
“ or managers, set up, formed or continued such  
“ playhouse, or such company of actors, shall cease,  
“ determine, and become absolutely void, to all  
“ intents and purposes whatsoever.”

It is upon this Act that the powers of the Lord Chamberlain are used, and in my opinion too often misused. Having sent the opera of *Fair Rosamond* to his lordship, it would have been assuredly acted, without any reference to the intimation received, had not the committee of Drury Lane Theatre recommended the payment of the trumpery fee ; which recommendation was accordingly attended to. This intimation did not, very prudently, say that the Lord

Chamberlain *prohibited* the performance of *Fair Rosamond*, but only that he would not issue a license. There is a vast difference herein ; because, as already observed, while the Act of Parliament gives the power to prohibit, neither that Act, nor Killigrew's patent, requires that any piece should be licensed.

The success that attended the introduction of *Fair Rosamond* induced me to try an experiment which was attempted by Charles Kemble in January, 1832—viz. to advertise an entertainment for performance on nights when the theatres had hitherto been closed. It came forth on Tuesday, February 28th, and was announced for repetition on the *Thursday* and *FRIDAY* following. On the evening of Thursday, his lordship's prohibition (contained in the subjoined petition to Parliament) was received, and the performance on the said Friday was consequently abandoned.

Mr. Kemble, in his examination upon this point before the select committee of the House of Commons, says, " I think it doubtful if the power of the " Lord Chamberlain could have prevented my " acting on any of those nights, if I had so pleased." But it is evident by such statement that he had not studied the *10th George II. chapter 28*, as closely as I have had occasion to study it. I sent the following petition to Parliament, presented and followed up by that spirited member, and noble-minded man, Mr. Duncombe ; but, despite his advocacy, I might just as well have left it alone.

“ PETITION OF ALFRED BUNN, LESSEE OF THE  
THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

“ The humble Petition of Alfred Bunn, of the  
“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,—

“ SHEWETH,

“ That the Theatre Royal Drury Lane was built  
“ and opened under the sanction, and by virtue of  
“ the powers, contained in a certain Act of Parlia-  
“ ment, passed in the fiftieth year of the reign of his  
“ late Majesty King George the Third, entitled, ‘ An  
“ Act for rebuilding the late Theatre Royal Drury  
“ Lane upon the conditions and under the regu-  
“ lations therein mentioned;’ and which Act ex-  
“ pressly directed the purchase of a certain patent,  
“ granted by King Charles the Second to Thomas  
“ Killigrew, for theatrical and other performances;  
“ and for the purchase of which, under such high  
“ sanction and direction, a vast sum of money was  
“ paid, which had been subscribed upon the faith of  
“ the said Act of Parliament, and other Acts sub-  
“ sequently passed by your honourable House.

“ That your petitioner is the lessee of the said  
“ theatre, with the use and benefit of the said  
“ royal patent attached to it.

“ That your petitioner entered into the contract  
“ for renting the theatre with the firmest reliance  
“ that he was to have the full benefit of all the  
“ rights and privileges of such royal patent, and  
“ he has expended very large sums of money in em-  
“ bellishing and decorating the said theatre, and

“ rendering it at once commodious for the public,  
 “ and creditable as a national theatre.

“ That your petitioner, in order to afford the  
 “ exhibition of talent and novelty, did on Tuesday,  
 “ the twenty-eighth day of February last, at a  
 “ great expense, produce an opera called ‘ Fair  
 “ Rosamond,’ a fine musical composition, and as  
 “ splendid a performance as any ever brought out  
 “ on the English stage; and that the said opera  
 “ having been first submitted to the perusal of the  
 “ ‘ Examiner of all theatrical entertainments,’ had  
 “ been duly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain  
 “ of his Majesty’s household, as ‘ not containing  
 “ anything immoral or otherwise improper for the  
 “ stage;’ for which license your petitioner paid the  
 “ sum demanded by the officer of the Lord Cham-  
 “ berlain.

“ That the said opera having been received by the  
 “ public with the greatest enthusiasm, your peti-  
 “ tioner did, on Wednesday, the first day of March  
 “ instant, advertise the performance of it for the  
 “ following Friday evening.

“ That at the late hour of seven o’clock on the  
 “ evening of Thursday, the second instant, a letter,  
 “ of which the following is a copy, addressed to  
 “ ‘ the Secretary to the Committee of the Theatre  
 “ Drury Lane,’ was delivered at that theatre some  
 “ hours after the said secretary had gone from his  
 “ office, viz.

" Lord Chamberlain's Office, March 22nd, 1837.

" Immediate.

" SIR,\*

" It having been publicly announced that the  
" performance of *Fair Rosamond* is to take place

\* The subjoined letter was sent to the Lord Chamberlain, with  
reference to the interdiction that had arrived from his office :

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

" March 4, 1837.

" MY LORD,

" It is a duty I owe to your lordship, as well as to myself, to state that  
" my announcement of a performance to take place at this theatre,  
" yesterday, March 3d, without any previous communication with  
" your lordship, was never contemplated with the remotest idea of  
" offering the slightest possible disrespect; but originated entirely  
" in my having perceived that other theatres in your lordship's juris-  
" diction had been playing a variety of ribald entertainments on the  
" Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, without interruption, which led  
" to my consequent belief that the rigidity of the system hitherto  
" observed had been abandoned.

" I avail myself of this opportunity of stating to your lordship that  
" I have received, in my capacity of lessee of this theatre, the most  
" marked indignity from the servants in your lordship's office, by  
" their addressing communications, affecting the management of it,  
" to other persons than the manager, the last instance of which, re-  
" ferring to the announced performance of Friday last, only came by  
" the merest accident to my knowledge, and might have been the  
" cause of my disobeying your lordship's mandate. I beg to assure  
" you that I am incapable of entertaining any other feeling than one of  
" the highest respect for your lordship, and of gratitude for the in-  
" dividual courtesy I have always received at your lordship's hands.

" I have the honour to be, my lord,

" Your lordship's very obedient servant,

" A. BUNN.

" To the Right Hon. the Lord Chamberlain, &c. &c."

“ at Drury Lane Theatre to-morrow, and as no  
 “ other than sacred entertainments have hitherto  
 “ been allowed at that theatre on the Wednesdays  
 “ and Fridays in Lent, I am commanded by the  
 “ Lord Chamberlain to refer you to a communi-  
 “ cation addressed to you from this department on  
 “ the 18th of February, 1833, and to acquaint you,  
 “ for the information of the committee of the  
 “ Theatre Royal Drury Lane, that his lordship  
 “ forbids the opening of the house according to the  
 “ announcement above alluded to; and the Lord  
 “ Chamberlain trusts that this communication will  
 “ supersede the necessity of taking any other steps  
 “ to enforce the due observance of the season of  
 “ Lent at Drury Lane Theatre, as heretofore.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM MARTINS.

“ To William Dunn, Esq. Secretary to the Committee  
 of Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.”

“ That it was entirely by accident the contents of  
 “ the above letter came to the knowledge of your peti-  
 “ tioner, no direct communication having been made  
 “ to him from the Lord Chamberlain’s office, In  
 “ consequence, however, of such prohibition, your  
 “ petitioner, even at that late hour, took immediate  
 “ measures for complying with his lordship’s man-  
 “ date, by closing Drury Lane Theatre on the  
 “ following evening; a step which has occasioned a  
 “ serious loss to your petitioner, as well as to the  
 “ author and composer of the said opera, the per-

“formers, and various persons employed in and  
“about the said theatre, and the numerous families  
“entirely dependent for their support on your peti-  
“tioner’s theatre being kept open, and who, it must  
“be remembered, are not paid when the theatre is  
“closed.

“That your petitioner humbly submits to your  
“honourable House, that this theatre, together with  
“those of the Adelphi, the Strand, and the St.  
“James’s Theatre, are within the understood juris-  
“diction of the Lord Chamberlain for the time  
“being, and that the three latter theatres have no  
“power to open their doors but by the express  
“permission of his lordship; and yet on the very  
“evenings in question, when your petitioner was  
“prohibited from performing at Drury Lane  
“Theatre any ‘other than sacred entertainments,’  
“these other theatres were permitted to give a  
“variety of entertainments of a mixed and ribald  
“character.

“The Adelphi Theatre has been opened ‘on the  
“Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent,’ with the per-  
“formance of an actress in ‘the delineation of the  
“Passions,’ with comic singing by other persons,  
“one of whom is the singer of the song called ‘Jim  
“Crow,’ and other negro melodies, and the per-  
“formances of the Bedouin Arabs, with scenic  
“displays, and a monologue.

“The St. James’s Theatre opened on the even-  
“ing of Friday, the third instant, with ‘comic

“ singing,’ and ‘imitations of the London actors,’  
“ with a pantomimic piece, called ‘The Adventures  
“ of a Night,’ and other miscellaneous singing.

“ The Strand Theatre opened on the same even-  
“ ing with a performance called ‘A Wallet of  
“ Whims and Waggeries,’ with musical perform-  
“ ances by the English Paganini, gymnastic ex-  
“ ercises by an Indian juggler, and a variety of  
“ dancing and scenic views.

“ That your petitioner, with great humility, sub-  
“ mits to the consideration of your honourable  
“ House, that all these entertainments are in direct  
“ violation of the restriction which has been placed  
“ on Drury Lane Theatre.

“ That in all those theatres, which are either in  
“ or out of London, and not in the jurisdiction of  
“ the Lord Chamberlain, every description of stage  
“ entertainment is nightly played throughout the  
“ whole period of Lent.

“ That the Church of St. Paul Covent Garden,  
“ in which parish Drury Lane Theatre is situate,  
“ is not open on the evenings of the Wednesdays  
“ and Fridays in Lent; and that all clubs, balls,  
“ concerts, public dinners, and amusements, are  
“ open and given on these, the same as any other  
“ evenings in the year.

“ Your petitioner therefore humbly, yet earnestly  
“ prays, that your honourable House will take into  
“ consideration the circumstances of the case, and  
“ interfere in order to save him and the numerous



“ other persons who are so deeply interested in  
“ keeping open an establishment of such a magni-  
“ tude, from the great loss which will otherwise be  
“ sustained by the partial exercise of an authority  
“ so extensive and powerful as that which has led  
“ to Drury Lane Theatre being closed; and that  
“ this theatre, enjoying a royal patent, and erected  
“ under an Act of Parliament, may not be deprived  
“ of privileges which are extended to minor thea-  
“ tres which have no patent whatever, and which  
“ therefore must, it is humbly submitted, have  
“ received from the Lord Chamberlain an authority  
“ his lordship has thought proper to withhold from  
“ your petitioner.

“ And your petitioner will ever pray,” &c.

Mr. Duncombe, who had kindly taken upon himself the task of carrying the business through the House of Commons as far as possible, had several conferences with the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Spring Rice) upon the subject, at the last of which he undertook to forward him the opinion delivered upon the subject by Sir James Scarlett in 1833, in consequence of a similar attempt that year on the part of Captain Polhill to open Drury Lane on a hitherto prohibited night having been frustrated by the Lord Chamberlain.\* As valuable

\* The following was Sir James's opinion: “ I find nothing in the  
“ patents to restrain the authority of the patentees upon the subject, nor

theatrical documents, I insert Mr. Duncombe's letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the reply of that learned functionary, which put an end to the matter for the time :

"The Albany Court Yard,  
"March 11, 1837.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"According to your request, I enclose you Sir  
"James Scarlett's opinion, given in 1833, with a  
"copy of the petition. The Killigrew patent and  
"the twenty-one years' license granted to Messrs.  
"Whitbread and Co. in 1816, are to be found  
"in the Appendix to the Dramatic Literature Com-  
"mittee's report, made in 1832, pp. 239 and 240.  
"The only Act of Parliament that at all bears upon  
"this subject is the 10 Geo. II. c. 28, whereby a  
"copy of every dramatic entertainment is required  
"to be sent to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days  
"prior to its representation, under a penalty of 50l.

"am I aware of any Act of Parliament that relates to it. The usage  
"has been very long, and it is possible that some general words may be  
"found in some Acts of Parliament for the observance of these days,  
"which may support the usage; but unless the statute is suggested to  
"me, I have not time, within the period when this case is required, to  
"look for it.

"J. SCARLETT.

"Temple, 19th Feb. 1833."

*The 10 Geo. II. cap. 28*, would have put Sir James right ; but he exemplified in this instance, as he did in a trial of mine, a remarkable fact, that from a good pleader a man may become "*a bad JUDGE.*"

“ or a forfeiture of the license or patent, and there  
“ is no other act whatever specifying the days upon  
“ which performances are to take place. You were  
“ quite right when you stated that it had been long  
“ the custom for theatres to close on Wednesdays  
“ and Fridays in Lent, but this custom has within  
“ the last few years ceased to exist as regards the  
“ minor theatres within the Lord Chamberlain’s  
“ jurisdiction, and has only continued to be observed  
“ by Drury Lane, on account of its having hereto-  
“ fore suited the lessee’s convenience to remain  
“ closed upon those evenings. I believe I am only  
“ expressing the wish of the gentlemen connected  
“ with the patent theatres, as well as of the public  
“ at large, when I say that they do not desire that  
“ theatres should be open on the following days,  
“ viz. *Ash Wednesday, the whole of Passion Week,*  
“ *Christmas Eve,* and of course Christmas-day. But  
“ when we know what is going on in every portion  
“ of this metropolis upon the days now in dispute,  
“ *all parties* consider the restriction attempted to be  
“ placed upon Drury Lane Theatre as a gross piece of  
“ humbug, and, as I contend, a stretch of power on  
“ the part of the Lord Chamberlain’s department  
“ unsanctioned by law. Permit me also to observe,  
“ that on last Ash Wednesday, a day on which I pro-  
“ pose that all theatres should be closed, the Brighton  
“ theatre, which is licensed by and under exactly the  
“ same jurisdiction, viz. the Lord Chamberlain, as

“ the theatres in the city of Westminster, the Court  
 “ at the time residing at the Pavilion, played  
 “ *Charles XII., The Maid of Switzerland, and The*  
 “ *Vampire.* If I might, therefore, be allowed to  
 “ suggest what I think would be the best course at  
 “ present to be pursued, looking at the defective  
 “ state of the law, and taking into consideration  
 “ what has already passed, it would be this, that in  
 “ the event of Drury Lane being opened on Friday  
 “ next, which in all probability it will, that no one  
 “ should give themselves further concern about it,  
 “ and the subject be allowed to drop. I will not,  
 “ therefore, trouble you further upon the subject, un-  
 “ less Lord John Russell or yourself should wish for  
 “ further information, in which case, if either you  
 “ or he will communicate your wishes, they shall  
 “ be immediately attended to by,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ THOMAS S. DUNCOMBE.

“ To the Right Hon. T. Spring Rice.”

“ March 12, 1837.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I showed your letter, together with the case and  
 “ opinion enclosed, to Lord John Russell, and to  
 “ other members of the Government, and it was  
 “ their opinion, that if the parties interested in  
 “ Drury Lane Theatre were to perform on Wednes-

“ day or Friday, they would expose themselves to  
“ all the penal consequences of persons *playing with-*  
“ *out a license.* How far this might affect them, or  
“ even their patent, I do not venture to inquire.

“ I return the case and opinion.

“ Yours very truly,

“ My dear Sir,

“ T. SPRING RICE.

“ T. S. Duncombe, M.P.”

Has any man a propensity for witnessing an execution? Kean sat up all night in a room opposite the Debtor's Door of the Old Bailey, to catch a full view of the deaths of the Cato Street conspirators; and as he was going on the stage in the evening, he said to me, “ I mean to die like Thistlewood to-night; I'll imitate every muscle of that man's countenance.” There is much general knowledge to be gathered, much useful reflection to arise, from scenes of this painful solemnity; and, as Mrs. Malaprop says, “ I own the soft impeachment” of having some years back had a hankering after such exhibitions. Excitement and contemplation are alike aroused thereby; if a man's disposition be good, it will be confirmed—and if evil, it will be chastened and ameliorated by these lessons of pains and penalties. For an *artiste*, an execution is quite an important event, as affording him the means of study not every day within his reach.

I went to hear the condemned sermon, this year, delivered before Greenacre, the murderer, in the CHAPEL of NEWGATE. The man's appearance and deportment furnished room for deep thought and close and minute investigation, standing as he did on the threshold of eternity, with all the conflicting emotions of humanity visible in his countenance. I am sorry to confess that my attention was more riveted on the looks of that man, to trace any change which might come over them, as the words of the sixth commandment fell upon his ear, than it was on that solemn part of the decalogue. I have now before mine eye the movement of every visiter in the chapel, as those awful words, "Thou shalt do no murder," fell upon the ears of him who had infringed on the sacred mandate. Imagine the words "Thou shalt do no murder" ringing in the ears of a MURDERER! I have now ringing in *mine* something almost as appalling—the shriek of the supposed participator in his crime, Mrs. Gale, who, from the convict's gallery, heard her guilty paramour vindicate her character, and to the truth of his assertion invoke the POWER before WHOM his incarnadined soul had in a few hours to appear. I must inflict on the reader some thoughts strung together at the time—wishy-washy stuff, to be sure, but the whole thing haunted me—and one's dulness wants a little relief, even if it be at the risk of becoming *more* dull:

*Lines written in the Chapel of Newgate, previous to  
the Condemned Sermon, on*  
JAMES GREENACRE,

WHO WAS HUNG THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR THE MURDER OF

H. BROWNE.

A thousand gazing eyes are there,  
And a thousand anxious breasts :  
And many a knee, in pretence of prayer,  
On the sacred threshold rests.

But it is not to worship the mighty God,  
To pour out a contrite heart,  
To bow to the throne, and to kiss the rod,  
For the sins in the soul that smart.

'Tis to look on the man of shame and crime,  
From the law of his God who hath swerved,  
To see, as he stands on the verge of time,  
If his spirit be yet unnerved ;

To watch, with a pause of suspended breath  
In scenes which the firmest sink,  
If that daring which led to another's death,  
From the thoughts of his own would shrink :

To list to the song of repentance, heard  
From the inmates of sorrow's cell,  
While deep on the culprit's ear each word  
Of the sixth commandment fell :

In some feature of that ensanguined face,  
Impressed by the stain of sin,  
With searching eye to attempt to trace  
The conflict of thought within !

'Tis idle all—in the boundless scope  
Of his Maker's lasting love,  
Though spared not here, there is yet a hope  
His soul may be saved above !

Sunday, April 30, 1837.

Has any man a propensity for managing a French company? for, after the present dissertation upon hanging, I know nothing else so nearly allied to a state of suspension. Dangling in the air is no doubt bad enough, but dangling after the heels of a French actress is very little better. Their professional expectations being chiefly based upon gallantry, their lives are passed in a routine of demands and concessions. The names of Cartou, Gaussin, Arnould, Fel, Defresne, and a long list of others, might be added to one equally long of modern date, and brought to bear in testimony of my assertion. If not already launched into her full career, the little butterfly is guarded by a mother or a duenna, superintending the developement of her charms; if it hath been winged, it is ushered in by some guardian angel of the masculine gender, and with these respective dragons of the *Hesperides* has the director of a French theatre to contend. The contest with the beauties themselves is quite formidable enough; for the exaction of so much courtesy, which their exaction of so many professional privileges renders it difficult to pay, neutralizes every effort to preserve harmony. If a French actress be allotted a character she does not like, or if the one she *does* like be given to another, the manager is waited upon by some noble admirer, to point out the injustice inflicted upon the object of his admiration, who generally ends his complaint, in case of its being redressed, with a promise to support the theatre—which promise



he makes a point of breaking. If the fair actress be given a dress which, in the eyes of her worshipper, does not set off the charms he worships to the fullest advantage, the manager stands a chance of having a bullet lodged in his thigh, or a small sword run through his thorax. If the lady, from not possessing the talent she imagines, or even if she does possess it, from not being as amenable as might be wished, be "shelved," the manager is either favoured with a visit from some proprietor of, or writer in, a journal, or with the perusal of some article in the same, pointing out the loss the public sustains by the non-employment of so fascinating a performer, of whose talents, but for such paragraph, the public would never have heard at all. It is impossible almost for a Frenchman, certainly for an Englishman, to be a match for a French actress, who is a perfect mistress of *coquetterie*, and has had the principles of *finesse* instilled into her mind from the earliest dawn of comprehension. The most perfect managerial adept I ever met is my friend *Monsieur Véron*, who, at the time he was directeur of the *Académie Royale de Musique* at Paris, visited this country for the purpose of engaging *Les Demoiselles Elssler*. He gave them a splendid dinner at the Clarendon, and when the dessert was put upon the table, the centre piece was a large salver of *bijouterie* for each of them to select one trinket from, of a given value, in addition to the theatrical engagement he offered them. It was not only an elegant but a very

politic mode of arranging business ; for while they would have otherwise been disputing half the time upon a question of a few hundred francs, a bauble, of not half the value, decided it at once. I shall not easily forget Véron's astonishment at the bill for this dinner ; not at its general amount, which, considering the splendour of the "spread" for sixteen of us, was very reasonable, (being under 40*l.*) but at an item of 8*l.* 8*s.* for soup ! He could not understand that the usual extraordinary charge of half a guinea a head, when turtle is put on the table, was any thing short of imposition, averring, with an ambiguous smile, that 8*l.* 8*s.* would nearly purchase all the soup in Paris.

But Véron knew his people ; for many things may be done with a foreign actress, if you commence operations with a dinner, and end them with a diamond.\* In these general remarks, however, not the slightest impolite allusion to *Mademoiselle Elssler* or her sister is intended, for I have invariably found her tractable and obliging ; but in the main, these performers are unmanageable. They will frequently be more than an hour behind their time at rehearsal, a great rudeness in itself, but they will be still more rude if they find the rehearsal has proceeded without

\* VÉRON seemed also to have studied *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

" Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,

" More than quick words, do move a woman's mind !"

*Act iii. scene 1.*

them, or has been dismissed in consequence of their absence. The progress of business is frequently retarded while that morning companion of the dressing-room, a basin of bouillon, is undergoing demolition; and is as frequently interrupted by the intrusion of admiring visitors *dans les coulisses*. In short, I have long since arrived at the conclusion that they are altogether ungovernable; for what with the demands for payments and perquisites, billets and boxes, dresses and dressing-rooms, beaux and their bullyings, impudence and intrigue, and all the consequences of non-compliance, a manager's life is harassed without achievement, while they have their way at last; verifying the ancient couplet,

“ For what they will, they will—you may depend on't,

“ And what they won't, they won't—and there's an end on't.”

## CHAPTER IX.

Patent delights!—the regular and the *irregular* drama—Their advantages discussed—Madame Pasta, the Lord Chamberlain, and his late Majesty—Some doubt where Drury Lane *is*—Sir Herbert Taylor and the Baron Ompteda—Lord Foley and his Gentlemen-at-Arms—London and Windsor duties—Fulfilment of the latter put in practice—Expensive soliciting—Lying in state, and state lying—Shakspeare's definition 'of honour—Duke of Beaufort and Mademoiselle Taglioni—Effect of royal deaths on royal theatres—Madame Schroeder Devrient—Bad French and bad conduct—High and low exchequers.

THE Patents! If the parties who are at this moment arguing so strongly the injustice of their existence, and the absolute necessity of their abrogation, were but in the exercise of the privilege supposed to belong to them, they would have a hearty laugh at themselves for the unnecessary pains they are taking. They are literally worthless to their possessors, and harmless to those they are supposed to injure. THE PATENTS (pretty dears!) are supposed to give their holders a monopoly over the drama, whereby they may act any entertainment of the stage they think proper, and limit other theatres to particular per-

formances. Reverse the case, and you will be much nearer the mark. The sticklers for the erasure of these patents from the statute-book contend that, notwithstanding the inroad on their privileges, and the consequent invasion of the law with impunity, by so many London theatres, as long as that law MIGHT be enforced there is no safety for the drama. This I take to be the extent of their discussion. There is not a vast deal of difference, in these days, whether a man, and above all men a manager, exercise the prerogative of another in defiance of the law, or exercise his own, backed by the law—he stands very little chance of being disturbed in his avocation. But supposing that the antagonists of these unfortunate documents had their own way, and the trade in the drama was declared to be free as that of any more necessary commodity, the opinions they entertain of that freedom leading to the regeneration of the stage are, to my way of thinking, erroneous in the extreme. I cannot think that any writer or disputant on the subject actually believes that if this “monopoly” as it is called, were removed, and its advantages extended over the town, a capitalist could be found to disburse one shilling towards the erection of a theatre FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE REGULAR DRAMA; nor can I think that any one theatre in existence would avail itself of the extension by resorting to that class of entertainment. In the very best days of the patent theatres, since they were rebuilt, except under temporary excite-

ment, the performance of the regular drama has never been able to sustain the burthens of the treasury. Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, until the period of their retirement arrived, played to miserable houses at Covent Garden Theatre, and recourse was had to BLUE BEARD, and other equestrian entertainments, to back up the want of attraction in Shakspeare's best plays, personated by our best performers. Mr. Kean, at the outburst of his fame, brought a stream of gold into the exchequer, but for many subsequent years played before as scanty audiences as could reasonably be expected to assemble in any place of public entertainment. Mr. C. Kean played at one part of the season, 1837-38, to some of the greatest houses (adopting theatrical phraseology) ever known ; but on his return, about six weeks after his first engagement, for the fulfilment of his second engagement, the benches of the theatre were comparatively deserted. Miss O'Neil's attraction was very great at first, but as soon as the novelty even of feminine beauty had passed away the charm was dispelled, and I have frequently seen that gifted actress in a new tragedy, supported by Messrs. Young, C. Kemble, and Macready, playing under the expenses of the evening. Mr. C. Kemble never attracted one shilling in any character he ever played, until the people were told he was about to retire ; and then the very people who had for a series of years judiciously asserted that his talent was unequal to an adequate repre-

sentation of *Hamlet* and other leading characters, flocked to see him enact the parts which they knew in their hearts he could not enact. Mr. Macready never *has* brought, and never *will* bring, in my opinion, except under particular circumstances, a farthing more than any ordinary actor—perhaps not so much, when all the exertions put into force to make him *APPEAR* attractive, are taken into consideration. Is there then any prospect of better performers arising than those this moment enumerated? Can the extension of the drama, if carried to the length of the China wall, be the means of producing better? Those who think so, will find that a legal extension of the means now limited to the patent theatres, instead of encouraging the culture of dramatic talent, will only lead to the encouragement of more outrageous demands by a few individuals, than they even now have the assurance to ask. The only one vital objection that has ever occurred to me against the extension of patent privileges, or performances by violation of them, is the abstraction of particular performers, by the bait of a high salary, from the fountain-head. The advantage of being solely enabled to perform the regular drama is laughable; for if a lessee of Covent Garden or Drury Lane were condemned to act nothing else, he would run away from either theatre rather than manage it. If there is any virtue in the patents of these buildings, it is only to be found in the supposed power of representing ANY entertainment which the holders of them

think proper—that power taken away, and “there is no more faith in them than in a stewed prune.” If the “monopoly” were to cease to-morrow, not one more actor of note, nor one more theatre for the display of his talent, would rise up. The theatres in this country, like every other establishment unprotected by civil grant, being matters of speculation, must be conducted in the long-run upon the principles which regulate speculators in general; and only when such speculators shall find the tendency of the public taste likely to pay them for the performance of the regular drama, will they ever attempt it. A little practice is more useful than all the theory ever contemplated; and practice has proved that the performance of the regular drama at the minor houses has answered no other purpose than that of weaning away particular performers from the larger theatres, to give them a higher salary and a false reputation; and that of compelling the manager of the larger theatres to introduce on their boards the trumpery talent of the smaller establishments. This has *degenerated* rather than *regenerated* the drama. Would Madame Vestris have given Mr. Farren 60*l.* a week at the Olympic Theatre, if she had been compelled to exhibit him in any part in any of Shakspeare’s comedies, or in the humbler characters of the regular drama by which he established his reputation at the winter theatres? Would my worthy friend Webster give Power 20*l.* a night, if he were obliged to play him



in *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, *Major O'Flaherty*, and other portions of the said regular drama? Or what is still stronger, would he engage Mr. Macready at the imprudent salary that mime demands, and play him in this "regular drama," unless he could secure Power to back his performances by making the people roar in the *irregular* drama? This is practice,—not mere preaching. Write away, gentlemen; but go and ask Mr. Webster who *has* the legal right, and Messrs. Yates, Davidge, Butler, Braham, and others, who have *not* the legal right, to exhibit on the boards of their theatres THE REGULAR DRAMA, whether any consideration on earth would induce them to act in mere furtherance of the art, and in the belief that, by so doing, the art would be supported; and I'll submit to have the hand that is penning these remarks chopped off to the wrist if they say, YES! They would occasionally act it by virtue of the law, as they would now without such virtue, if any extraneous circumstance arose to hold out to them a prospect of profit; but give them fifty patents apiece, and they would not avail themselves of their patent rights one jot the more without such prospect. If the existence of the patents of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres were any actual infringement on the amusements of the people, the people would cry out fast enough for their abolition; nor would the matter end merely in the "cry"—the abolition would be carried: but the people are not

sufficiently dramatic for that, and therein lies all the secret, if the controversy were to continue until doomsday. If the public *animus* HAD been dramatic, the complaints that have arisen amongst a select few against the constitution of these theatres would long since have become general, if the cause for them had been just; but as the errors complained of are, for the most part, of public and not individual creation, no solid ground exists for entertaining them. The law which has been called into existence since the grant of these patents, and which to a certain extent nullifies the grant altogether, is a far greater piece of humbug, and a more glaring monopoly, than all the patents that ever were given. If, as "the learned in the law" of the land have laid down, the power be vested in the crown of granting, extending, or revoking all patents and licenses to theatres, the subsequent vesting of any such power in the hands of a lord chamberlain is a clear case of quackery. Killigrew's patent, under which Drury Lane Theatre opens, granted by Charles II., and recognised in sundry Acts of Parliament down to George III., is still at the mercy of the Lord Chamberlain by the 10th of George II. cap. 28, who *may* prohibit, and *has* prohibited, performances which the patents themselves give their possessors the power of representing. We had better, therefore, have a laugh, and then proceed to an exemplification of our assertions, in addition to instances already quoted.

I entered at this time into an engagement with Madame Pasta, involving no less a sum than 1000*l.*, for a few nights' performance. The freshness, beauty, youth, and talent of Mademoiselle Grisi had raised her into the situation of monopolizer of the opera stage, and the stupendous genius of Pasta would have been lost to this country, but for the supposed PATENT RIGHTS of Drury Lane Theatre, whereby foreign performances of all descriptions had been so repeatedly given. In a full reliance on the "powers" in my possession, on the strength of which I had before introduced Italian operas, and the Italian opera company, I announced Madame Pasta for her celebrated character of *Romeo*, in Zingarelli's opera of *Romeo e Giulietta*, and engaged Madame Gianoni to enact the gentle *Juliet*. The Vice-Chamberlain, acting under the guidance of the Lord Chamberlain, (the Marquis Conyngham, toasted by his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex as the protector of the large theatres,) prohibited the performance,\* and thus deprived the English public of a treat they will never witness again.

\* The subjoined is a copy of the official document despatched by order of Lord Charles Fitzroy, then the Vice-Chamberlain, under guidance of the Lord Chamberlain, who was out of town for a day or two :

" Lord Chamberlain's office,

" May 11, 1837.

" Immediate.

" Sir,

" It being announced that an Italian entertainment of the stage is  
" to take place at Drury Lane Theatre, I am directed by the Vice-

It was contended that the performance of an Italian entertainment at an English theatre would be unjust to the manager of the Opera House, and calculated to do him a serious injury. A pack of nonsense! The frequenters of the Opera House affect not to know that any other theatre is in existence! Mr. Charles Kean told me, that a noble patroness of his met him at a *soirée*, and that the following dialogue passed between them :

*My Lady.*—Ah, my dear Mr. Kean, how do you do? How long have you been in town?

*Mr. Kean.*—About three weeks!

*My Lady.*—Well, and shall we see you act?

*Mr. Kean.*—I *am* acting!

*My Lady.*—Where, pray? we must go.

*Mr. Kean.*—At Drury Lane.

*My Lady.*—(with an extra quantity of haw-hawing) Where is Drury Lane?

It was further contended, that under the opera arrangement of 1792, no Italian operas were to be given at Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatres.

“ Chamberlain, acting in the absence of the Lord Chamberlain, to inform you that his lordship is commanded to prohibit any other than English entertainments of the stage at this theatre, and therefore no Italian performances of any kind will be sanctioned there.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM MARTINS.

“ A Bunn, Esq.,

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.”

That is perfectly true ; but by the said arrangement, the Opera House was never to be opened but on a Tuesday and on a Saturday, and then only with an Italian opera ; and its season was to be limited to sixty nights. Now what has the Lord Chamberlain granted to *that* theatre ? Week after week the Opera House has been opened six successive nights, and its concert rooms six successive mornings ; and in addition to Italian Operas, we have seen on its stage German operas, French operas, French plays, concerts, and, on particular occasions, English performances.\* The arrangement of 1792 had been long

\* This subject was taken up warmly by the press ; but I have not room for more than one excellent view of the subject, from the pen, I understood at the time, of one of the Drury Lane renters, a gentleman of great note and extensive information.

“ *To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.*

“ Sir,—The performance of Zingarelli's Italian Opera of *Romeo e Giulietta* was announced for the purpose of introducing on the English stage, at a moderate price, the eminent talent of Madame Pasta, and the representation being prohibited by an order from the Lord Chamberlain's office, I have been at some pains to ascertain the grounds upon which the announcement in question was issued.

“ The lessee of this theatre is assignee for the term of his lease of the royal patent under which it is nightly open ; and without unnecessarily occupying attention by a recital of its more minute contents, the following extract will furnish ample justification of the arrangements entered upon by him.

‘ We do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, grant full power, license, and authority from time to time, to act plays and entertainments of the stage of all sorts, peaceably and quietly, without the

since broken in upon, and especially so by the Opera House itself; an example that had been fol-

‘ impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as shall desire to see the same.’

“ It is herein manifest beyond dispute, that Drury Lane Theatre is empowered to play all entertainments of the stage, without exception ; and in evidence of such power, it is only necessary to recall to public attention, that on repeated occasions, performances of the most varied character have been introduced on its boards, and every foreign artiste of distinction has appeared in them. Amongst others, the entire opera of *La Gazza Ladra* has been enacted by the present united talent of the Opera House, and French vaudevilles, German operas, acts and scenes from several Italian operas, have likewise been represented, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever.

“ I have been informed, that in August 1792, an arrangement was entered into between the representatives of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Opera House, by which the two former bound themselves not to enact any Italian performances, and the latter to enact nothing else. That arrangement was in no respect binding on the present lessee, it having been long since set aside ; inasmuch as for some years past the Opera House season has consisted of performances of the most general and diversified character, there having been given on that stage Italian operas, French operas, German operas, French dramas, English dramas, concerts, &c. &c.

“ It was also an understanding in the arrangement in question, that the nights of performance at the Opera House should be confined to Tuesdays and Saturdays. How this stipulation has been acted upon requires no comment.

“ The Opera arrangement, moreover, never contemplated that new minor theatres should be established in Westminster, or that the licenses of those in existence at the time should be extended as they recently have been ; by which extension, and the illegal performance

lowed with impunity by both the patent theatres. This assumption, therefore, of the Lord Chamberlain was unjust.

It was first thought that a firm but respectful representation of the facts to his late Majesty would lead to a removal of the prohibition; but subsequently I accompanied a noble lord, interested in the affairs of Drury Lane Theatre, to Windsor, under the impression that his lordship's intimacy with Sir Her-

" of pieces belonging to the patent theatres, the talent of most of the  
 " leading performers of the day has been withdrawn from its proper  
 " sphere of action by temporary temptation, and the general interests  
 " of the patent property virtually affected. In addition to these innovations, an Italian opera was licensed throughout the last winter.  
 " It does, therefore, seem somewhat paradoxical, that at the very time  
 " the Lord Chamberlain has chosen to exercise his authority in extending additional advantages to places having no claim to them, (and  
 " which presumed advantages have terminated only in disaster,) he  
 " should likewise direct it to the abridgment of vested rights enjoyed  
 " by patents, on the faith of which nearly a million of money has been  
 " advanced by the public to erect and put into action the theatres  
 " which possess them.

" The exertions of the most industrious may be paralysed by oppression, and whether Drury Lane Theatre will be able to withstand the attempts incessantly made to pull it down from the eminence in which public favour has placed it, remains to be proved; but there can be only one opinion on the interference of the Lord Chamberlain's office on the question at issue.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient Servant,

" A SHAREHOLDER,

(" Who has never received a Dividend for Twenty-five Years.")

bert Taylor would, at all events, lead to an opportunity of fully explaining the circumstance. As we entered the quadrangle, his Majesty, who was in conference with Sir Herbert and the Baron Omp-teda at a window, recognised the noble lord, and guessed the nature of his lordship's business, as will appear. The noble peer might have claimed an audience, but, with the recollection of that demanded by Lord Oxford of George IV., his lordship sent a few lines up to Sir Herbert Taylor, asking when he could have the pleasure of saying a few words to him. Shortly afterwards one of the pages came down, and thus delivered himself: "Sir Herbert's compliments, and he regrets extremely that he is so engaged to-day, as to be unable to see your lordship; and his Majesty commands me to say, that if it is about the theatres, your lordship must go to the Lord Chamberlain!" Exeunt the patrician and the plebeian with a flea in their ears!

A respectful memorial, pointing out all the circumstances herein adduced, the heavy loss which the prohibition would entail, the fact of its being a performance only of ten nights' duration, and other strong points, was forwarded to his Majesty, who, however, was pleased to continue obdurate, and Madame Pasta was unable to appear on the London stage. The political position of affairs had left his Majesty little more than two branches of his



immediate prerogative, over which his ministers did not exercise some sort of control, and in both of these I was mixed up—the patent theatres, and the honourable corps of gentlemen at arms. A day or two after my return from Windsor, I was sent for by Lord Foley, who commands this honourable corps, and was apprised by him that his Majesty informed him, at the last levée, that “if Mr. Bunn attempted to interfere with his Majesty’s prerogative in regard to the patent theatres, he should be under the necessity of requiring him to leave the corps of gentlemen at arms.” Lord Foley knew, admitted, and stated, that the one matter had nothing whatever to do with the other, and was pleased to speak in flattering terms of my conduct as one of his corps. But the urbane observations of his lordship (and a more excellent young nobleman is not in existence) were of no use. If I contended for what I imagined to be my patent rights, I must leave the court; and if I did not contend for them, I must lose my money by forfeiting Madame Pasta’s engagement. If my rights *had* been what I once *supposed* them to be, and if there had been no Act of Parliament more powerful than a King’s patent, I would have left it to the people to determine whether they were willing that *their* pleasure should be at the pleasure of the Lord Chamberlain, and would have made my last bow at St. James’s. As it was, I had no alternative but to prove, by sub-

mission, that "the king's name is a tower of strength," and to retire from the contest.

This prohibition of the Lord Chamberlain led to the introduction of a bill into the House of Commons, by Mr. Duncombe and Sir Benjamin Hall, for the amendment of the Act, (10 Geo. II. cap. 28,) the "soliciting" which cost me about £150. It was sent up to the House of Lords, where it was very roughly handled by the Marquis of Salisbury, probably more out of an electioneering feeling to the late opponent of his interest at Hertford, than for any particular interest about the bill itself; but it was still more severely cauterised by the brand of the Bishop of London, who stated that he had received his Majesty's directions to watch the progress of the bill with the utmost caution. The consequence of this scrutiny in the House of Lords was, that the bill was returned to the Commons in a form which, instead of restricting the powers of the Lord Chamberlain, materially increased them; and in moving the rejection of the amendments of the House of Lords, the honourable member for Finsbury said, that if he knew one mode by which he could more forcefully than by another mark the contempt of the House of Commons for their Lordships' mutilations, he would adopt that mode. A few days after this circumstance, his Majesty's death dissolved the Parliament.

I presume that few of my readers have been en-

gaged in the mournful duty of guarding, according to the forms of state, the remains of their departed sovereign; and, as having been employed upon it on the present occasion, a reference to it may be considered a pardonable digression. The room erected in the Waterloo Gallery of Windsor Castle, for the ceremony of lying in state, was one of comparatively small dimensions; and being completely covered with black cloth, lighted by about one hundred and sixty large wax candles, the centre occupied by the royal coffin reposing under a rich canopy, the head, foot, and sides lined by lords in waiting, gentlemen ushers, heralds, and gentlemen at arms, bearing various standards and banners, the barriers defended by a detachment of the yeoman of the guard, and the further end crammed with shoals of the gazing millions, it may be believed that in the month of July the heat was overpowering. During the period of the day when the apartment was thrown open to the public, very little opportunity presented itself for reflection, attention being absorbed by the necessity of standing in soldier-like order, and of cutting altogether as military a figure as possible, so that, even if you were fainting with heat and fatigue, the people might not have a chance of detecting any such weakness. It was somewhat diverting, nevertheless, to see the efforts of the more obese members (self included) struggling through a case of regimentals, and a cart-load of accoutrements,

to sustain a genteel and thin appearance amongst the more dandified part of the creation by which they were surrounded, and to watch the conflict for pre-eminence in appearance, in a scene where all such worldly feelings should be hushed; but it is nature in life, that only death itself can alter the character of. It was, however, when

“ The midnight bell

“ Did, with his own iron tongue and brazen mouth,

“ Sound one unto the drowsy race of night”—

—when nearly all this substantial pageant had passed away—when the halls of the Castle had become a desert, their tenants sunk in sleep, and when silence reigned around—that contemplation had full and free opportunity of enjoyment, while at the head of the coffin a noble lord was sipping “the honey-heavy dew of slumber,” while some pursuivant, with folded arms and crossed legs, was following such peerless example, and the drowsy guards also if they had dared—when lights were expiring in their sockets before the approaching gleam of the morning’s first gray hue, and at intervals the sound from the neighbouring clock-tower was booming over the solemn scene—I could not but reflect on the short space of time that had elapsed since the illustrious tenant of the gilded receptacle I was guarding had, within a few yards of the room we were then in, denied a boon to the poor player-

king, praying for the exercise of a worldly privilege. Methought of the bard divine who hath so grandly sung—

“ When that this body did contain a spirit,  
“ A kingdom for it was too small a bound ;  
“ But now, two paces of the vilest earth  
“ Is room enough.”

The mighty and the exalted had passed on to the enjoyment, it is hoped, of a brighter and a less perishable crown than that of this transitory scene, while the lately humble and powerless now stood there in greater power, (the power of the QUICK over the DEAD,) a spectator of the scene, and of the distinctions which death had levelled. Very early in the morning, the noble *arbiter elegantiarum*, the courteous Lord Chamberlain, did me the favour of holding converse with me ; and, by way of diverting the theme, inquired of me how the theatres were getting on. I told him so far the truth, that they were both in a state of actual starvation : had it not been a breach of etiquette, I *could* have told his lordship that he was in a great measure the cause of the distress of one of them, but I was satisfied with the honour of his lordship's recognition, and we parted—I bowed down with the weight of conferred dignities ! and his lordship with the consciousness of having conferred them ! “ What is honour ? A word. What is in that word “ honour ? What is that honour ? Air—A trim reck- “ oning. Who hath it ? He that died o' Wednesday.

“ Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is  
“ it insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it  
“ not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction  
“ will not suffer it!!” What a lesson this is, if man  
would but profit by it, and especially the man who  
is now writing about it!

The circumstances in connexion with Madame  
Pasta’s engagement occurred at Windsor the 17th  
May, and even as late as the 31st May we find the  
good old King lending his powerful support in  
behalf of a ball for the Spitalfields weavers. Taglioni  
*la déesse de la danse*, being exclusively engaged  
to me (professionally be it understood,) could not  
dance elsewhere, during her engagement, without  
my sanction; to obtain which, the following letter  
was sent to Drury Lane Theatre :

“ The Duke of Beaufort presents his compliments  
“ to Mr. Bunn, and begs to inform him that a wish  
“ having been expressed by his Majesty that some  
“ dances should be executed by the professional dan-  
“ cers at the Spitalfields weavers’ ball to-morrow  
“ evening, it has been proposed that Madlle Taglioni  
“ and her sister-in-law should dance a gavotte, to  
“ which she has consented, if Mr. Bunn’s permission  
“ can be obtained. The Duke trusts that, under  
“ the circumstances above mentioned, Mr. Bunn  
“ will kindly grant that permission.

“ Park Place, Wednesday evening,

“ May 31, 1837.”

It was not for an humble individual like myself to recur to the injury I had suffered by the refusal of my petition in the instance of Madame Pasta. My obvious duty was to obey even the slightest wish of my gracious sovereign, conveyed as it was by one of the most generous, kind, and deservedly popular noblemen to be found in that sovereign's dominions ; and I only mention the matter in furtherance of the reflection it carried with it, that in three weeks after this manifestation of our excellent hearted monarch's feelings for the welfare of a suffering body of his subjects, he was himself the subject of THEIR feelings,

“ A clod

“ And module of confounded royalty.”

That the reader may know how the royal theatres are affected by a calamity of this description, a copy of the official document issued on the present occasion is here introduced :

“ Lord Chamberlain's Office,

“ June 20, 1837.

SIR,

“ I am authorised by the Lord Chamberlain to  
“ acquaint you, that it having been taken into consi-  
“ deration the very great distress which the shutting  
“ up of the theatres for any length of time would  
“ occasion to numerous families, the Queen has  
“ commanded that the closing of the theatre under  
“ your management, on account of the melancholy

“ event of the demise of our late most gracious sovereign, shall be confined to this evening, the two days of the body lying in state, and the day of the funeral, of which due notice will be given you.”

“ I am Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM MARTINS.

“ To the Manager of  
the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.”

But let us return to the world again, and wind up the season of 1836-37. Amongst the many horrors I have had to encounter in the shape of performers, and especially foreign performers, I have never met a greater than one at this time under my management, though her superior talents have no warmer admirer than her late manager. Madame Schroeder Devrient was engaged in the first instance at £80 per night, to commence the first week in May, and on the day she was expected in England this letter was received from her :

“ Hamburg, le 28 April, 1837.

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

“ Je suis bien fâché d'être obligé de vous faire l'annonce que je ne peut arriver à Londres que la 10-12 May. L'horrible temps que nous avons eu



“ ce mois-ci en Allemagne, a tellement detenu mon  
“ voyage que je suis en retard avec tous mes en-  
“ gagements de 15 jours. Je ferais mon possible  
“ pour finir plus tôt mon engagement ici, que j’avais  
“ accepter avant le vôtre, et qui je suis au moins  
“ obliger dans tenir la moitié. J’espère que les peu  
“ de jours que j’arrive plus tard, ne feront pas grande  
“ différence, parceque je n’ai qu’à chanter 16 fois  
“ chez vous, je peut bien finir encore dans la bonne  
“ saison.

“ J’ai bien travailler avec la langue Anglaise, et  
“ je me suis donner toute la paine possible pour bien  
“ reussir ; je pose tout mon espoir sur le grand  
“ peuple Anglais, qui j’en suis sûr aura de l’indul-  
“ gence with the *endeavor* d’une artiste étrangère  
“ qu’elle cherche son plus grand orgueille la dedans  
“ de reussir dans une langue dans laquelle les  
“ plus grand esprits de tous les siècles ont parlé  
“ au monde entier.

“ J’ai encore une demande à vous faire. Seriez-vous  
“ assez aimable, cher ami, de me procurer un loge-  
“ ment à Londres pas trop cher, dans une bonne rue,  
“ et pas trop loin du théâtre. J’ai besoin de trois cham-  
“ bres pour moi, et une pour mon domestique.  
“ J’espère que vous auriez la bonté de m’envoyer une  
“ ligne de réponse, et que vous n’êtes pas trop fâché  
“ que je viens quelques jours plus tard. *Fidelio* sera  
“ toujours mon premier début, n’est-ce pas ? *La*  
“ *Norma* me fera grand plaisir de la chanter à Lon-

“ dres. N’avez vous pas faire traduire *Romeo* de  
“ Bellini ? Je voudrais bien le chanter.

“ Au revoir si tôt qui possible, au plus tard le 12

“ Mai. Avec toute amitié et respect,

“ Votre humble,

“ WILHELMINE SCHROEDER DEVRIENT.

“ Monsieur Monsieur Bunn,

“ Directeur du Théâtre Royal, Drury Lane,

“ Londres.”

Though I am not accountable for her bad French, I had to suffer for her bad conduct ; for she began her engagement (pardon the Hibernianism) by breaking it, being unable to make her appearance before the 15th. Owing to this circumstance, occasional indisposition, and an impression always uppermost in the mind of a foreigner that the receipts were enormous, the original conditions of her contract were, towards the last few days of its period, departed from, and by mutual consent she was to be paid a *clear* FOURTH of each night’s receipts. Her share for performing on Monday the 17th July produced her *only* 32*l.* 10*s.* !! and on the following morning, the last of the season, when the advertisement and bills announcing her to appear in *Fidelio* and the last act of *Romeo* had been many hours distributed over the town, this letter, signed, but not written, by her, was received by me :

Monsieur,

“ Je le dois à la dignité de l’art que j’exerce, et à  
“ mon propre honneur, de vous dire nettement, que

“ pour une somme telle qui j’ai reçue hier je ne  
 “ me présenterai pas à la scène aujourd’hui. Si vous  
 “ voulez donc que je joue ce soir, je ne le ferai qu’après  
 “ avoir reçu de vous la garantie sûre d’un revenu  
 “ de cent livres ! La conviction dont je crois devoir  
 “ me flatter d’avoir constamment fait tous mes efforts  
 “ pour satisfaire le public devant lequel j’ai eu l’hon-  
 “ neur de jouer, me fait croire que la demande que  
 “ je vous adresse ici sera jugée juste et convenable  
 “ par tout le monde, surtout par quiconque sait que  
 “ ce ne fut pas la première fois hier que j’ai reçu  
 “ une somme bien au-dessous de celle fixée dans  
 “ notre contrat. Je vous prie, Monsieur, de me  
 “ faire savoir votre décision le plutôt possible. Si  
 “ vous consentirez à ma demande, je ne manquerai  
 “ pas de jouer, mais en commençant par le dernier  
 “ acte de *Romeo*, et en finissant avec *Fidelio*.

“ WILHELMINE SCHROEDER DEVRIENT.

“ Le 18 Jul. 1837.”

I told the reader in a preceding chapter, that  
 players were a very funny set of people, and surely  
 my assertion will be borne out by this letter, which  
 sets off by saying that the writer owes it to the  
 dignity of her art to depart from the agreement by  
 which she was exercising that art, and, not satisfied  
 with the 32*l.* 10*s.* for a night’s performance paid her  
 under that agreement, to demand 100*l.* My reply  
 was a very simple affair, merely stating that I should  
 not pay her a farthing more than her agreement

warranted, leaving the public, in case of her absence, to decide between us. Being determined on not deviating a jot to the right or to the left, she gave way and fulfilled her duty, but a more brazen instance of what the multitude call a "try-on" never was attempted on a manager.

I will now leave it to any dispassionate reader to determine, whether the deserter's back under the lash of the drummer is not almost a preferable state of existence, when compared with the life of a manager under the afflictions of such a season as this. Taglioni was engaged on unheard-of terms to "back up" Malibran's "*off-nights*," and the ink which signed the contract was scarcely dry, before the astounding intelligence was received of the death of her whose engagement led to the other. The *hiatus* was filled up, as well, perhaps, as it could be, by Madame Schroeder Devrient, and the further deficiency might have been supplied by Madame Pasta, if her performance had not been prohibited—a prohibition felt doubly severe, as happening at the very time that the licenses to all the minor theatres in the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction had been extended—thus cutting our throats with a two-edged sword. But ours was a patent theatre! that was *some* comfort! Then the fortuitous attraction of Mr. Charles Kemble's retirement rendered a reduction of the prices absolutely necessary in the middle of a season, after all contracts based upon the former prices had been made for that season: and finally, the death

of the King, the accession of her Majesty, and the dissolution of Parliament, with all the excitement attendant on such events, literally distracted people's attention from theatrical pursuits, and wofully thinned the ranks of those who might otherwise have been disposed to pay us a visit. With all these drawbacks, despite all the attractions that were given, the season terminated in a loss : yes, as in all such cases, to *be* poor, and to *seem* poor, are held to be irreconcilable ; so, on the 18th of July, after the termination of Madame Devrient's labours, poor Malibran's *hôtel garni*, Mr. John Cooper, bobbed on before the public in his capacity of stage manager, and thanked them for the patronage they had bestowed upon our exertions. It is not possible to conceive a greater degree of humbug than thanking people for what they have *not* done—for that is the actual meaning of most of the speeches which wind up the season of a London theatre. It seemed to me latterly so broad a farce, that, though as fond as any one of a good laugh, I would rather not enjoy it at my own expense, and the practice was therefore discontinued with me. But I see it still put in force by some of my lively survivors, without an atom more of truth in the declaration than used to be embodied in the intellectual valedictions of Mr. John Cooper. The bard “who drew *Achitophel*” has written,

“ ’Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,

“ But hard the task to manage well the low ;”

the truth of which is so applicable to theatrical matters, one would think that, in addition to a playwright, the author of this couplet had been a manager.

## CHAPTER X.

New reading of a passage in *Macbeth*, and a new lessee—Ambition defined—Bartley's value in a new speculation—His attempt to upset an old one—A good chance for all kinds of performers—A butcher's cur—For particulars inquire of Mr. Forster—Taking a chop with a manager—Singular proposal to Mr. Charles Kean, contrasted with a similar one made to his father by Mr. Charles Kemble—Difference between the pride of certain performers—Symptoms of war between the two theatres—Announcement *for* announcement—The voice of the public press defined—outrageous exaggeration disposed of—Distress of overpaid performers, and a proposed remedy for it—The drama's laws—How to advance the British drama—And reasons for so doing—And the result of so doing—"Look here upon this picture, and on this."—A sure way of being deceived.

TOWARDS the latter end of the season, the termination of which has just been recorded, Mr. Osbaldiston had signified to the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre his reading of *Macbeth's* celebrated expression, "hold—enough!" and declined going on any further with the enterprise. It was evident

from the first, that a perseverance in the system which induced that gentleman to take Covent Garden Theatre never could succeed, and no better proof of it can be adduced than Mr. Osbaldiston's relinquishing the undertaking. It was a speculation entered upon in error, carried on in error, and abandoned in prudence; and of his managerial career at Covent Garden it may be justly said,

" Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it."

His secession led to Mr. Macready's assuming the reins of government, inasmuch as he could not have become lessee if his predecessor had *not* seceded; but when the field was open to him, his *real* motives for taking upon himself the responsibilities of lesseeship, though latent, were more powerful than will be at first imagined. I by no means seek to infer that Mr. Macready's ill feeling to me was the sole cause of his entering the arena of management against me. It was one reason, and no doubt operated very powerfully upon the other; and that other was the most extraordinary degree of conceit, backed by the most extraordinary degree of calculation, imaginable. It seemed to him fully evident that the prospect of his establishing himself in the situation of a leading tragedian in London, or of obtaining good engagements anywhere else, was very remote, unless he adopted some unusual expedient; for Covent Garden Theatre was tenantless, his outrage



upon me had closed Drury Lane against him, and Mr. Forrest had returned to his native country to reap an additional harvest, arising from the additional fame he had obtained in England: and thus three great sources of emolument and renown were inaccessible to him. He must, therefore, either remain an ordinary (and ordinary enough, heaven knows!) stock actor, or make some desperate effort to be gazed upon in the light of a constellation. Mr. Counsellor Phillips was called into professional notoriety by a speech in a crim. con. case, in which, amongst other rhapsodies, he says, "Ambition has, indeed, been called a vice, but then a vice so equi-  
 "vocal, it bordered upon virtue: that though it re-  
 "posed on earth's pinnacles, it played in heaven's  
 "lightnings," and so on—and it was this sort of Hibernian ambition that haunted Mr. Macready—

. . . . . "a dizziness

That wouldn't let the gentleman go about his business ;"

and determined him upon making a tremendous effort—a kind of *aut Cæsar aut nullus* affair altogether. Had not Mr. Macready been a performer, and had the intentions upon which it was pompously announced that Covent Garden Theatre was to be conducted, been carried into execution, a more salutary system for the welfare of the drama could not in the present day have been pursued. Although this side of the question is perhaps the only

one with which the public has anything to do, yet, as private feelings so very frequently actuate conduct, and especially actuated his, we must enter a little upon that part of the business.

Previous to the end of my last season, the rumour was rife that Mr. Macready was about to enter upon management; and it soon became known that, by the agency of a performer then engaged to me, and subsequently to him, he was trying to detach some useful servants belonging to Drury Lane Theatre; and in one or two instances, where little talent and no principle regulated the parties, he succeeded. The usual joke—"O it *must* succeed, it's so very respectable—Bartley's in it!" was then circulated about town, and the parties went to work in earnest. Notwithstanding the liabilities Mr. Macready undertook, he reserved to himself the power of abandoning them at pleasure; and thus, while he could terminate his season whenever he thought proper, and so put an end to farther loss, I was bound by a lease of three years, determinable only at the pleasure of the lessors. This novel state of things very materially altered my position, and induced me to seek a similar advantage from my landlords. They met on the 10th of August to discuss my application, and about an hour after their meeting had broken up, at which they had expressed a willingness to aid me in any possible way consistent with the duty they had to fulfil to their

constituency, the following specious letter came to hand :

“ Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
“ 10th Aug. 1837.

“ Mr. Bartley presents his compliments to Mr.  
“ Dunn. In consequence of the circulation of state-  
“ ments respecting Mr. Macready’s tenure of Covent  
“ Garden Theatre, tending to prejudice his interests  
“ with the public, and to injure the various parties  
“ holding property in the patent theatres, he (Mr.  
“ Bartley) is requested by that gentleman, in justice  
“ to himself and all such parties, and in contradic-  
“ tion of the misrepresentations made on the subject,  
“ to inform Mr. Dunn, as treasurer to the general  
“ committee of Drury Lane Theatre, that Mr. Mac-  
“ ready has taken Covent Garden Theatre from the  
“ proprietors at a very heavy rent, to be paid in  
“ large nightly proportions, before any other demand  
“ can be answered ; and that the loss on his specu-  
“ lation, to whatever amount it may be allowed  
“ to run, must be defrayed from his own private  
“ funds.

“ Mr. Bartley begs to forward this declaration of  
“ the real facts of the case, to obviate the necessity of  
“ a published statement.

“ To William Dunn, Esq.,  
“ Treasurer to the General Committee of the  
“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane, &c.”

The obvious purport of this letter was to say to the committee, "If you have heard that Mr. Macready does not pay a heavy rent, and therefore mean to grant any accommodation to Mr. Bunn, I am requested to tell you to the contrary," taking pretty good care not to tell the committee upon what conditions the payment of that rent depended. Mr. Bartley's letter was, without any singular effort of ingenuity, seen through; and though, like myself, not one of the "lean kind," yet, odd enough to say, it is not difficult to see through Master George at any time. When the separation was about to take place between Messrs. Lee and Polhill in May 1831, each had his partisans in the theatre; for while Polhill found all the money, Lee possessed all the power. A canvass, therefore, was hotly pursued amongst the performers; and when that charming actress and intellectual woman, Mrs. Orger, was asked whether she was for Lee or Polhill, she archly replied, "I shall wait till I know which side Harley takes." So is it with Master George Bartley, who, ever since his departure from Glasgow, has taken special care to be on the safe side of the question. The annexed few lines, in reply to his letter, were sent by Mr. Dunn, and are remarkable for the clear, cool, and concise view my friend William takes of all matters brought under his consideration:

"Mr. Dunn presents his compliments to Mr. Bartley; begs to acknowledge the receipt of his

“ communication, both to himself and the committee,  
“ which, however, did not come to hand until after  
“ the committee had broken up.

“ Mr. Dunn is unable to comprehend the meaning  
“ or intent of the communication, inasmuch as it  
“ does not appear in any way to apply either to  
“ himself or the committee, and therefore need not  
“ put Mr. Bartley to the trouble of farther explanation on the subject.”

What an inexplicable set of people performers are! It can scarcely be believed that the bait thrown out in the applications which were made to the profession generally, by the new Covent Garden management, seeking to enlist their enthusiasm in the present attempt at a restoration of the British drama, was swallowed in many instances, and the blockheads either could not, or would not, see that while it was sought materially to abridge their emoluments, no prospect presented itself of bettering their condition by any advancement of their talent. The comedians who were “hooked” could have no chance, because the Olympic possessed such a superior comic force as to drive *Thakia* from the patent boards. The lessee’s aversion to music, as well known as the applicable lines in the *Merchant of Venice*,

“ The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ;  
The motions of his spirit are as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus.

put the vocalists in jeopardy ; while tragedians, only hired to hold up their master's tail, were in a very fair way of being literally crucified. All this was evident to the meanest capacity ; and yet many, with excellent understandings, chose, or affected, to be blind on the occasion. The lessee was backed by a small clique, who followed him on his expulsion from Drury Lane, and were even more resolutely bent on upholding him now. One of the foremost of this redoubtable party, and, if possible, more enthusiastic on behalf of his idol, and more bitter against his idol's opponents, than even "my learned friend" Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, rejoiced then, and, for aught I know to the contrary, rejoiceth now, in the name of Forster ; and was entrusted with the power, which he exercised to its fullest extent, of reducing the *Examiner* Sunday journal, (that had sustained a hitherto unblemished reputation, and had rendered its columns famous by criticisms on all matters of art, and especially in connexion with theatres,) to be a vehicle of the most impudent and unfounded abuse. I never had a transaction of any description with this person, and to my knowledge never saw him but once,—when, if I remember rightly, entering my room, I saw a man lolling on the sofa in it, reading a paper, with as much nonchalance as if he had been in his own garret. He came with some message from Mr. Macready, at the time that performer was engaged

with me; and on inquiring, after his departure, of Mr. Cooper who the party was, he replied, "Oh! that's Forster." I was not made much wiser by this response, and setting him down for some ill-bred individual who had been more accustomed to stand at the back of a chair than to occupy the seat of one, he passed from my mind, as all recollection of his person has from my memory; nor is it likely that even the name would ever have been brought back to it, but from the wanton, shameless, ignorant, and insolent attacks made upon me, week after week, in the said newspaper. That a man should uphold him whom he admires by every honourable means at his command, is not only natural but highly commendable—that he should resort, in order to effect his purpose, to calumny and falsehood, is as disgraceful to himself as it is injurious to the party whom he would serve. The parentage of any one is not, of itself, matter of the slightest reproach, as long as, through a descendant, what it owned of bad is made good, and what of good made better. Hark to the Twickenham nightingale:

"Honour and shame from no condition rise—

Act well your part—there all the honour lies;"

and it would no more detract from this Forster's position, or from his talents, if he had any, than it did from those of Cardinal Wolsey, to know that

each was the son of a butcher. But Shakspeare, in singing of the past, prophetically harped upon the future, when he framed that searching line,

“ This butcher's cur is venom-mouth'd ;”

and it is high time that some person muzzled him. To such a pitch had Forster carried his insolent conceit at one time, that he had the hardihood to proclaim to Charles Kean's own face, that no other tragedian but Macready should succeed in London, as long as he could wield a pen. Mr. Price accused him of this—he denied having made such assertion, and actually went to Brighton to try and persuade Charles Kean to write a letter, acquitting him of the charge ; but Kean, while he admitted Forster's assurances to the contrary, declined subscribing his own belief. London must be in a most blessed condition if a fellow of this standing can sway the opinions of any half dozen of its citizens. For my own part, though there is no species of abuse can exceed that which this writer, without provocation, has heaped upon me, I can safely say, “ there is not a withered leaf which the autumn wind strews upon the heath that is more valueless in my eyes,” than he and all his scribblings. The bearing of this Forster, during the lesseeship of Mr. Macready, when he was permitted to enjoy the free range of the theatre, was more forbiddingly impudent than were even the things written by him, which he called criticism. I have been told that he was in the habit of ordering his chop as regularly in the manager's room,



as if it had been an eating-house. "I hear it by the way," and mention it accordingly; not that it is a matter of any moment as long as the lessee permitted it; but far beyond this, I have it on the authority of several practised performers, that he has repeatedly sat upon the stage during rehearsals, and delivered his judgment—nay, even his directions, as to its regulation. Had he done so on any stage under my management, and I could have lifted my foot sufficiently high, most assuredly I would have endeavoured to kick him off it.

Thus armed with self-conceit, and aided by others similarly equipped, Mr. Macready entered upon the management of Covent Garden Theatre in the season of 1837-8. No effort was left untried, no stone unturned, to enlist the enthusiasm, and of course—that beautiful word!—the "sympathy," of the British public in the cause of so much legitimacy, and to wheedle the profession into the operation of supporting it. Amongst other applications made at the time, may be mentioned one that, for cunning and effrontery, surpasses anything imaginable. Mr. Macready offered an engagement to Mr. Charles Kean, which the other prudently declined, knowing perfectly well that, under such auspices, his return to the metropolis must prove a disastrous failure. Macready had not to dread the reputation of any other tragic performer; and it was, therefore, part and parcel of his policy to conciliate Mr. Kean's adherents by proposing an engagement to him, and

to crush him *by* engaging him. The offer of alternating principal characters with him displayed the cunning of the business ; for if Macready had even played the *Ghost* to Kean's *Hamlet*, he would have taken care, by virtue of his office, to be received and better reported than the hero of the play. That he should offer such an engagement, and that the other should decline it, is not at all to be wondered at ; but the sequel to the correspondence passeth all human understanding. When Macready found that Kean saw through the whole affair—that he was not to be made another man's stepping-stone, and that no chance presented itself of including him amongst his other restorators of the British drama, he had the modesty to ask Mr. Charles Kean not to oppose his exertions, *by entering into an engagement at any other theatre !* If I had not been told this by Mr. Kean himself, I should have doubted the possibility of the art of humbug being carried to so impudent a pitch. There is but one instance in my knowledge on record, with which it will bear any comparison ; and as this occurred with the manager of the same theatre, and with the father of the same performer, it is entitled to especial commemoration.

It has been already stated, and is well known, that the season of 1828-29, at Covent Garden, terminated in apparently utter ruin, the building and all that was therein being seized by the parochial authorities, and the contents advertised for sale. In this season Mr. Kean, senior, had partly fulfilled an engagement, which indiscretion and consequent ill health pre-

vented his completing ; and Mr. C. Kemble finding that, through such reasons, his attraction was not equivalent to the payment of 50*l.* per night, willingly let him off, but stipulated that he should play the uncompleted ten nights in the season of 1830-31 ; and that he should *not play* IN LONDON until that period arrived, being *more than a year and a half to come!* When the theatre was seized, and no probability existed of its re-opening, performers were perfectly justified in looking about themselves ; and no doubt Mr. Kean did. An appeal to the public, and to the voluntary assistance of many performers, enabled the proprietors to open their establishment for the season of 1829-30 ; and amongst others who gratuitously offered to assist them was Mr. Kean, who came up to London to fulfil his promise of GIVING them *three nights of his services*. But the success of Miss Fanny Kemble had made the manager, her father, pass over slightly many of the offers which led to the re-opening of the theatre ; and Mr. Kean's three nights' gift merged in the more important point of excluding him from London all that season, and of binding him to complete the aforesaid ten nights in the following season. I am no advocate for the disregard Mr. Kean, on more than one occasion, manifested for the maintenance of strict faith, as will be seen by a reference to page 105 of the first volume, but a more dog-in-the-manger piece of business than this never came under my cognizance. That the reader may judge of the merits of this case, and with the view of preserving documents

of such theatrical eccentricity, the full statement of Mr. Charles Kemble himself is herewith subjoined.

“The Affidavit of Mr. Charles Kemble, sworn  
“28th November, states,

“That in the year 1828 he proposed to Mr. Kean  
“to enter into an agreement to act at Covent Gar-  
“den Theatre, to the effect following: Mr. Charles  
“Kemble proposes the following terms to Mr. Kean  
“—for twenty-four nights’ performance, in the en-  
“suing season, at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
“viz. 50*l.* for each night’s performance, the engage-  
“ment to commence on the 1st of October next, and  
“to conclude previous to next Christmas. Mr.  
“Kean to give the preference to the Covent Garden  
“managers in the renewal of an engagement, and  
“not to perform at any other theatre in London  
“during the period of his engagement with the  
“managers of Covent Garden Theatre, or previous  
“to the commencement of it. London, February  
“25, 1828.

“That Mr. Kean accepted such proposal: at the  
“foot of the same, the words, ‘I accept the above  
“proposal,’ were written and signed by Mr. Kean.

“That in pursuance of such agreement Mr. Kean  
“acted at Covent Garden for several nights; but in  
“consequence of the theatre being closed from an  
“accident that had happened to the gas works, Mr.  
“Kean did not perform the whole twenty-four  
“nights for which he was engaged, before Christmas

“ 1828, but only sixteen of them. Mr. Kemble  
“ then proposed to Mr. Kean that the above agree-  
“ ment should be terminated, and another agree-  
“ ment, to commence after Christmas 1828, should  
“ be entered upon ; but to be extended from eight  
“ nights of performance, which remained under the  
“ first agreement, to twelve nights, and to be upon  
“ the same terms as are specified in the first agree-  
“ ment ; to which proposal Mr. Kean acceded ; and  
“ accordingly he acted at Covent Garden on the  
“ nights of the 5th and 8th of January, 1829, and  
“ received the sum of 50*l.* for each night, and the  
“ performance of Mr. Kean in *Richard the Second*  
“ was advertised for the 12th of January, 1829, but  
“ on that night Mr. Kean was not in a condition to  
“ appear before the public, and he did not act.

“ That in a few days afterwards Mr. Phillips, a  
“ friend of Mr. Kean, called on Mr. Kemble, and  
“ stated that he came at the request of Mr. Kean to  
“ say, that after what had passed, he was very desi-  
“ rous that some arrangement should be made to  
“ enable Mr. Kean to suspend his performances in  
“ London, and retire into the country for some time,  
“ with a view to recruit his health, and to enable  
“ him to study some new parts ; as he felt that his  
“ attraction in those parts in which he was accus-  
“ tomed to act was diminished, and Mr. Phillips,  
“ in making such proposal, acted with the authority  
“ of Mr. Kean. That Mr. Kemble, and his co-  
“ acting proprietors, most readily complied with

“ such wish of Mr. Kean, and Mr. Kemble addressed to him a letter to the effect following :

“ Theatre Royal Covent Garden,

“ January 21, 1829.

“ DEAR MR. KEAN,

“ I have great pleasure in acquainting you that the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre have every disposition to meet your wishes respecting the proposal with which you favoured me through your agent, Mr. Phillips, viz. that you shall be permitted to suspend all your performances here until the season after next, for the purpose of preparing yourself in two or three new characters ; that you will be ready, on the commencement of the season 1830-31, to return when required to your engagement in Covent Garden Theatre, of which engagement there remain ten nights incomplete, and which ten may, if you please, be extended to twenty-four nights in the first instance, and afterwards to as many more as may be thought mutually advantageous. In the mean time (it is understood) you are not to act in London. And now, my dear Mr. Kean, let me beg of you to fortify yourself in your good resolutions. Go to Bute, where I wish, with all my heart, I could join you ; study your new parts, for, as Shakspeare says, ‘ Nothing pleases but rare accidents,’ and your own experience must have taught that perfection itself without novelty will, in the course of time,

“ become a drug ; return to London with renovated  
“ health, and run another course as prosperous as  
“ the first. That you may do so, is the very sincere  
“ wish of,

“ Dear Mr. Kean,

“ Yours most truly,

“ C. KEMBLE.”

“ That Mr. Kean accepted the terms in such letter,  
“ and accordingly wrote and signed the following  
“ letter to Mr. Kemble :

“ Barnes Terrace.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Your letter confirms my first impression of  
“ your character—namely, that you are a good man,  
“ and a good actor. Your kindness in the first  
“ instance of our meeting cannot be erased, and the  
“ second is placed in the monument of memory. I  
“ regret, in your letter, telling me you cannot visit  
“ Bute—Shakspeare, you, and I, I think, would  
“ form a most excellent companionship, (*pares cum*  
“ *paribus facillime congregantur* ;) but I shall obey  
“ your injunctions, and fortify my constitutional  
“ batteries against the new campaign.

“ My dear Sir,

“ With sincere respect,

“ EDMUND KEMBLE.

“ P.S.—I accept the proposals made by the managers of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.  
“ E. KEMBLE. I had nearly forgotten all this.”

“ That this last-mentioned letter had no date  
“ affixed to it when received, but Mr. Phillips called  
“ on Mr. Kemble by the authority of Mr. Kean,  
“ and added the day of the date on which the same  
“ was written, viz. ‘January 22, 1829,’ and wrote  
“ thereunder the date added by Mr. Phillips by  
“ Mr. Kean’s authority.

“ That in consequence of the agreement contained  
“ in the letter of the 21st January, 1829, and so  
“ accepted by Mr. Kean, the latter ceased to per-  
“ form at Covent Garden, by which the proprietors  
“ sustained a very considerable loss.

“ That in consequence of the embarrassed state of  
“ the affairs of Covent Garden, an appeal was made  
“ to the public, and several actors of eminence  
“ offered their services gratuitously during the pre-  
“ sent season of 1829-30.

“ That Mr. Kemble has been informed by Mr.  
“ Henry Robertson, the treasurer of the theatre,  
“ that on the 22d day of the present month of No-  
“ vember, a person called at the box-office of the  
“ theatre, and said he came, by desire of Mr.  
“ Kean, to inform him that Mr. Kean was just arrived  
“ in London, and should be happy to see some one  
“ from the theatre, and he added, *that the Drury*  
“ *Lane people were already about Mr. Kean.*

“ That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, the  
“ stage-manager of Covent Garden, that Mr. Bartley,  
“ on the following day, had an interview with Mr.  
“ Kean, at his residence in Duke-street, Adelphi,



“ and that at the commencement of such interview  
“ Mr. Kean informed Mr. Bartley that at that time  
“ there were in the house *two persons from Drury Lane* -  
“ *theatre* ; and Mr. Bartley was at that time unable  
“ to make any arrangement with Mr. Kean as to  
“ said three nights, and parted with Mr. Kean, on  
“ an understanding that Mr. Kean would call the  
“ next day at Covent Garden, to meet Mr. Kemble  
“ on the subject. That on the following day Mr.  
“ Kean sent to Mr. Bartley the following letter :

“ November 24, 1829.

“ DEAR BARTLEY,

“ I am very unwell this morning ; the fatigue of  
“ travelling such an immense distance has nearly  
“ overcome me, and nothing but the cause,—the  
“ cause, my soul,—could reconcile me to the exertion.  
“ Numerous engagements are pouring in upon me,  
“ and I should like to get rid of the three nights as  
“ fast as I conveniently can. What say you to next  
“ Monday, Wednesday, and Friday ? I give the  
“ management to understand that I play on no other  
“ nights but those I have been accustomed to in both  
“ the London theatres.

“ Yours, dear Bartley,

“ Very truly,

“ EDMUND KEAN.

“ G. Bartley, Esq.”

“ To which Mr. Bartley, at the desire of Mr.  
“ Kemble, sent the following reply :

“ Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
“ November 24, 1829.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I was waiting with Mr. Kemble in expectation  
“ of the pleasure of meeting you here, as appointed  
“ at our interview yesterday, when your letter of this  
“ morning was delivered to me. Mr. Kemble re-  
“ quests me to say that he is most anxious to con-  
“ sult your convenience, but the nights of Monday,  
“ Wednesday, and Friday in next week, which you  
“ suggest for your performances, are advertised for  
“ Romeo and Juliet, and I need not say to you that  
“ our duty to the public renders any alteration now  
“ impossible. As you observe that you can play on  
“ no other nights but those you have been accus-  
“ tomed to in both the London theatres, I can only  
“ assure you that every endeavour shall be made to  
“ comply with your wishes. Before, however, we  
“ say more on this point, Mr. Kemble desires that I  
“ should remind you, in allusion to the in-  
“ timation which you made to me yesterday of your  
“ intention to enter into an engagement in London  
“ for this season, that there is an engagement sub-  
“ sisting between you and Covent Garden Theatre,  
“ which precludes your acting in London during  
“ the present season, and he thinks it just to all  
“ parties that this should not escape attention. It  
“ will afford Mr. Kemble much satisfaction to ac-  
“ commodate circumstances to your present views ;

●

“ and difficult as it will be, at this advanced period  
“ of the season, to make such alterations in the ar-  
“ rangements of the theatre, (which arrangements  
“ have been made on the faith of your agreement), as  
“ will enable him to do so, he is ready to encounter  
“ such difficulty *on your account*, and with this  
“ feeling he was prepared to make you an offer of  
“ an engagement for this season, had you been able  
“ to meet him.

“ As you are unwell to-day, if you will favour us  
“ with an appointment for to-morrow, Mr. Kemble  
“ will be happy to talk the matter over with you.

“ You will be kind enough to receive this com-  
“ munication expressly on the understanding that  
“ it is made without prejudice to your present agree-  
“ ment with Covent Garden Theatre.

“ GEORGE BARTLEY.”

“ That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, that  
“ no answer was received from Mr. Kean to the  
“ last-mentioned letter, nor did he call at Covent  
“ Garden, and Mr. Bartley therefore, on the 26th  
“ instant, wrote to Mr. Kean the following letter :—

“ Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
“ Thursday, Nov. 26, 1829.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I hoped you would before this have favoured  
“ Mr. Kemble with an appointment, as I requested  
“ in my letter of Tuesday the 24th. I think he

“ would have proposed an arrangement that would  
“ have been found satisfactory. Pray let me have  
“ the pleasure of hearing from you.

“ I am, my dear Sir,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ GEORGE BARTLEY.

“ To Edmund Kean, Esq.”

“ To which Mr. Kemble has been informed by  
“ Mr. Bartley, and believes, no reply has been re-  
“ ceived, nor has Mr. Kean ever since called at  
“ Covent Garden, nor at any other place, on Mr.  
“ Kemble, or, as he is informed and believes, on the  
“ other plaintiffs, (that is to say, other proprietors,)  
“ or either of them, or Mr. Bartley.

“ That he has been informed, and believes, that  
“ Mr. Kean has, within these few days, but when  
“ in particular he does not know, accepted some  
“ engagement, or has agreed to act at the Theatre  
“ Royal Drury Lane, upon certain terms unknown  
“ to Mr. Kemble, and that such engagement is to  
“ commence on Monday next, the 30th November.

“ That by the terms of the engagement subsisting  
“ between Mr. Kean, Mr. Kemble, and the other  
“ plaintiffs, Mr. Kean has undertaken and agreed  
“ not to act in London until he has completed his  
“ said agreement, and Mr. Kemble is advised that  
“ Mr. Kean will be guilty of a breach of his agree-  
“ ment if he acts at Drury Lane, as he has agreed  
“ to do, and Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs  
“ will sustain great and irreparable injury thereby;

“ and they have therefore, in manner aforesaid, applied to Mr. Kean, and requested him not to act at said Theatre Royal Drury Lane, as he had agreed, and threatens to do, but to fulfil his said agreement; Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs being willing, as they have always been, to perform the same in all respects.

“ That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, that in the conversation between Mr. Bartley and Mr. Kean, the latter expressly admitted that he was under an engagement with Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs.

“ That as evidence of the intention of Mr. Kean to perform at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the appearance of Mr. Kean is advertised in the play-bills published by the manager of Drury Lane, for Friday, 27th November last, in the following terms:—‘The manager has great pleasure in announcing to the public, that Mr. Kean has kindly volunteered his services in aid of the establishment which first fostered his talent, and will act Richard III. on Monday—Othello on Wednesday—and Sir Giles Overreach on Friday next.’ And that in another part of the bill Mr. Kean’s appearance is advertised as follows:—‘Monday, Richard III.; Duke of Gloucester, Mr. Kean. Wednesday, Othello; Othello, Mr. Kean. Friday, A New Way to Pay Old Debts; Sir Giles Overreach, Mr. Kean.’

“ Mr. Kemble believes that Mr. Kean has au-

“thorised such advertisements, and intends to act  
“on the nights and in the characters so advertised;  
“and he is advised and submits that Mr. Kean  
“ought to be restrained by the injunction of the  
“court from acting at Drury Lane Theatre, or at  
“any other place in London, until he shall have  
“acted ten nights at the Theatre Royal Covent  
“Garden, in the season 1830-1831, according  
“to the terms of the agreement hereinbefore set  
“forth.”

Let the reader now dispassionately weigh all this in his mind—let him compare it with Mr. Macready's position relative to Mr. Charles Kean, and if he happens to be one who, without having any insight into my management, has thought proper to abuse me, let him understand that I should have thought myself only fit to be kicked off my stage, if I could ever have contemplated such a proceeding. But persons were to be found who pitied Mr. Charles Kemble; and I have seen it roundly asserted in print, and heard sundry blockheads assert *vivá voce*, that Mr. Charles Kean used Mr. Macready very ill by playing first fiddle at Drury Lane, instead of playing second fiddle at Covent Garden. This “top-proud\* fellow” seems literally

\* The pride of some people differs from that of others. I was passing through Jermyn-street late one evening, and seeing Kenney at the corner of St. James's Church, swinging about in a nervous sort of manner, I inquired the cause of his being there at such an hour.—

to have thought the world (the dramatic world at all events) was made for him, and him alone, as it will be our business to make manifest.

The necessary preparations being completed, the following announcement made its appearance :

“ THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

“ Mr. Macready begs most respectfully to announce, that this theatre will open under his direction on Saturday, September 30.

“ It will not, he trusts, be deemed presumptuous in him to state generally and briefly the views with which he has ventured upon an undertaking, the duties of which, when worthily discharged, are most arduous, and the responsibilities to him most serious. Neither will it, he further trusts, be deemed invidious or indelicate in him to allude to the actual circumstances of the national stage.

“ The decline of the drama, as a branch of English literature, is a matter of public notoriety. The *distressed state* and *direct losses* of those whose profession is the stage, if less generally known, are more severely felt. Under these circumstances he has become the lessee of Covent Garden Thea-

He replied, “ I have been to the St. James’s Theatre, and do you know I really thought Braham was a much prouder man than I find him to be.” On asking him why, he answered, “ I was in the green-room, and hearing Braham say, as he entered, I am really proud of my pit to-night, I went and counted it, and there were but seventeen people in it !”

“ tre, with the resolution to devote his utmost zeal,  
“ labour, and industry, to improve the condition of  
“ that great national theatre; and with the hope of  
“ interesting the public in his favour by his humble  
“ but strenuous endeavours *to advance the drama as a*  
“ *branch of national literature and art*, it will be  
“ his study to accomplish this object by the fidelity,  
“ appropriateness, and superior execution of scenic  
“ illusion.

“ He has received promises of the most friendly and  
“ zealous co-operation from able and distinguished  
“ authors, and he has spared no expense or pains in  
“ forming an efficient company. As English opera  
“ has become an essential part of the amusements of  
“ a metropolitan audience, he has been anxious to  
“ procure the aid of native musical talent, and trusts  
“ *he has succeeded in his engagements* with composers,  
“ singers, and instrumental performers.

“ Some alterations in the theatre, made with the  
“ view to consult the convenience and the respect-  
“ ability of the audience, will be best appreciated  
“ from experience. It will suffice to state, that the  
“ first circle of boxes has now a private lobby,  
“ similar to that of the dress-circle, so that parties  
“ who may choose to occupy that part of the house  
“ will not be exposed to intrusions, hitherto justly  
“ complained of as offensive.

“ A change in the prices of admission has also  
“ been found absolutely necessary. In regulating  
“ them, a mean has been taken between the high



“ scale of former seasons and the reduced scale,  
“ which the experience of the two last seasons has  
“ proved wholly inadequate to the proper maintenance of the establishment.

“ It remains for him to add one thing more.  
“ Instead of announcing the reception of new performances by *outrageous exaggerations in the play-bills*, he will trust to the impression carried away  
“ by the audience, and *to the voice of the public press*.

“ In fine, he most respectfully hopes the public  
“ will extend its indulgence as well as patronage to  
“ an undertaking upon which he has entered with a  
“ comparatively short interval for preparation, at a  
“ time when the condition of the theatre was such,  
“ as to demand even more than ordinary activity  
“ and attention.—September 23, 1837.”

It will be well to analyse this pretty document, and find out, if possible, the meaning of it. In consequence of “the decline of the drama,” and the “distressed state” and “direct losses of its professors,” Mr. Macready states that he became the lessee of Covent Garden Theatre, “with the hope of advancing the drama as a branch of national literature and art.” By this it would seem that the actors shared the fallen fate of the drama, instead of having led to it, according to the argument I have all along maintained; and Mr. Macready proposed to repair the damage done to both. Having, in a previous

part of these pages, been arguing that the performers had mainly contributed to the destruction of their art, and a brother manager being found to argue to the contrary, it behoveth me to state the grounds of *my* argument, and to see how my opponent has carried out *his*. Do the enormous salaries that have been paid to Messrs. Kean, Young, C. Kean, Braham, Macready, Farren, C. Kemble, Power, Liston, Miss Stephens, Miss E. Tree, &c. &c., and the liberal, and in some respects exorbitant, salaries which have been paid to Messrs. Bartley, Jones, Harley, Wallack, T. P. Cooke, Wrench, Cooper, Warde, Keeley, H. Phillips, Templeton, Wilson, Balfe, Vandenhoff, Mesdames Inverarity, Romer, Shirreff, Phillips, and a host of others, bear testimony to "the distressed state" of the parties who have received them? It is perfectly true, that some of these worthy people have suffered "direct losses" by the failure of the theatres in which they have been engaged; but that failure has been generally, if not invariably, brought about by the extravagant demands of those very people who have suffered those very losses: and even then, looking at the result, you will find that many of those herein enumerated are in affluent, and, with a single exception or so, ALL are in comfortable circumstances: so that in reality, while the art has gone to the devil, the professors of it have flourished marvellously. Can the new lessee, despite all his blustering announcement, disprove this statement of the case?—or can he point out instances of

“ the distressed state ” of these recited professors ? —and if he can, will he say how he proposed to, and how he actually did, alleviate their “ distressed state ? ” Did he raise the salaries of the different performers he enlisted in the sacred cause of restoring the national drama ? and did he give them better business than they had been in the habit of playing ? (the only two modes by which “ the “ distressed state ” of a performer can very well be alleviated.) Not he : on the contrary, his salary list was pared down almost to a nicety, and the greater part of his company were nightly degraded and oppressed. This portion of his announcement therefore is, to say the least of it, a joke ; because the professors of the art were *not* in a “ distressed state ; ” and if they had been, his system but distressed them the more. The only really distressed individual mixed up with the new scheme, was Mr. Macready himself. He, poor fellow, had only received from his late manager some 30*l.* or 40*l.* per week, and it was imperative upon him, therefore, to give himself a lift ; and we shall presently see what sort of a lift he *did* give himself. In scrutinizing this document still more, our attention is directed to the parade of the lessee’s having procured “ the aid of native musical talent, English opera having become an essential part of the amusements of a metropolitan audience : ” and still further on, we are regaled with a statement, that “ instead of announcing the reception of new performances by outrageous exagger-

“ tions in the play-bills, the lessee will trust to the  
“ impression carried away by the audience, and to  
“ the voice of the public press.” Pretty palaver! and  
yet the cockneys swallowed this trash at the onset,  
though they have long since disgorged the dose. We  
will tell why, presently—in the mean time, as it was  
manifest to the commonest understanding that the  
drift of Mr. Macready’s announcement was levelled  
against myself and my shisstem, (as Doctor O’Toole  
has it,) I took the liberty, in advertising the open-  
ing of Drury Lane, to reply to it in an indirect  
manner, thus :

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane. The lessee begs  
“ most respectfully to announce that this theatre  
“ will open for the *winter season* on Saturday next,  
“ October 7, 1837.

“ It has been the custom, and very properly so,  
“ for new managers to make new professions, and  
“ boast of new regulations. The lessee of Drury  
“ Lane Theatre feels that any such course would  
“ be at once useless and unbecoming on his part.

“ It is a matter of notoriety that the distressed  
“ state of the national theatres owes its origin to  
“ the exorbitant demands made by certain pro-  
“ fessors, to the prejudice of the whole community ;  
“ yet, with this difficulty to contend against, the  
“ lessee has upheld the legitimate drama in a far  
“ more effective way than it can possibly be repre-  
“ sented at the present moment ; but if he has

•

“ almost invariably sustained a heavy nightly loss  
“ by the performance of such plays as *Macbeth*,  
“ *Othello*, *Richard the Third*, *Hamlet*, *Every Man*  
“ *in his Humour*, *School for Scandal*, &c., while the  
“ representation of such novelties as *Gustavus the*  
“ *Third*, *The Jewess*, *The Siege of Rochelle*, *St.*  
“ *George*, *King Arthur*, &c. &c., (each played about  
“ one hundred nights in the season it was first per-  
“ formed,) has been productive of great nightly gain,  
“ it is obvious that by this selection public pleasure  
“ and private enterprise have been equally con-  
“ sulted.

“ Mr. Garrick delivered in a prologue, on the  
“ stage of Drury Lane Theatre in 1747, the follow-  
“ ing opinion of Dr. Johnson, with reference to  
“ legitimate or illegitimate performances of the  
“ stage under the management of that eminent tra-  
“ gedian :

“ “ Ah, let not censure term our fate our choice—  
The stage but echoes back the public voice ;  
The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,  
And we who live to please must please to live.’

“ It remains for the lessee to add but one thing  
“ more. Notwithstanding he has had to combat the  
“ rivalry of an almost annual succession of mana-  
“ gers, instead of announcing any outrageous exag-  
“ geration respecting himself, he will simply state a  
“ determination to continue his humble exertions for  
“ the promotion of public amusement, and to sustain

“ the character Drury Lane has long enjoyed of  
“ being the FIRST THEATRE OF THE EMPIRE.

“ September 30, 1837.”

The gauntlet being now fairly thrown down, let us see how the battle was fought. It was natural to suppose, that in order to advance the drama as a “ branch of national literature and art,” some means hitherto unadopted would be resorted to. The plays of our best masters must be performed in a much better manner than that in which they had been represented, and “ the fidelity; appropriateness, “ and execution of the several means of scenic illusion ” must be maintained in a much superior style. As to the first part of the business, such plays *had* been represented by the talents of the great Kemble family, by the unapproachable Kean, by Messrs. Young, Charles Kemble, Macready, and Miss O’Neil, and during the very last season by Messrs. C. Kemble, Vandenhoff, and Macready. The “ scenic illusion ” had for years been sustained by the genius and talents of Messrs. Grieve, Stanfield, Greenwood, Whitmore, Marinari, Pugh, &c. &c., and could not therefore be equalled. However, Mr. Macready was bent upon ADVANCING THE DRAMA in both points of view, and therefore *he put himself* into all the leading business, without any such support as his predecessors were upheld by, and employed Mr. Marshall for the SCENIC ILLUSION !! One of his first efforts was a revival “ from the text of

Shakspeare," at least as much was stated—(and in more instances than one, but in no one instance maintained.) The man who brought his troop of apes from Paris might with much more justice have exclaimed with *Othello*, "Goats and monkeys"—*from the text of Shakspeare!*—It was all on a par with the vast parade that was subsequently made by "the voice of the public press," of the lessee's playing *Prospero*, a character which, in his last engagement with me, he stipulated *not* to play. What think ye of this, gentle reader? But let us come at once to this "voice of the public press," and we shall then find out the secret of the whole business.

Previous to his assumption of the curule chair, Mr. Macready had received from the press the meed of as much approbation as was due to his abilities—he was frequently very justly condemned, occasionally deservedly commended. On his seating himself in the said chair, he became the idol of most who wrote concerning him; for while the sentiments of the established journals remained unchanged, and were not to be changed by any venal means, a host of others sprang up that were to be influenced only by such means. I firmly believe that Mr. Macready put upon the free list of Covent Garden Theatre almost every metropolitan publication,—reviews, magazines, journals, penny pamphlets, halfpenny squibs, and so on—and I will tell the reader *why* I believe so—because, for the first time during my

long management, scores of writers in such productions, of whom, until that moment, I had never heard, applied to me for the freedom of Drury Lane Theatre, alleging as a reason why they ventured to *apply*, and why I ought to *comply*, that Mr. Macready had obligingly placed them on the free list of Covent Garden. Presuming this to be the case, any "outrageous exaggeration" thus insured "in the public press" outraged all "previous outrage." Employing the aforesaid Forster as a whipper-in, the lessee had only to signify his wishes, and "the sons of freedom" would "exaggerate" for him until they were "black in the face." Do you not see through the whole affair now, good master reader? Do you not see that a manager, being an actor, could not, possessing Mr. Macready's modesty, absolutely puff himself in his own plays, and uphold his own exertions by his own "outrageous exaggerations?" and the easier and more obvious mode, therefore, was, to let the scribes attached to his staff do it for him, passing it all off as "the voice of the public press." Do you not see all this, and do you not see, in the back-ground, the really eminent writers in our leading journals and periodicals, smiling with ineffable contempt at this shameless prostitution of the strength of opinion and value of judgment they, on all occasions, deal out without prejudice to all alike?

But herein lay the secret. Mr. Macready was, by the press, to be written into the position of a



leading tragedian, so that, even if he should lose any money in his speculation as manager of Covent Garden Theatre, it was easily recoverable by the terms he would be enabled to demand of other managers, when he ceased to be one himself. That such was the case, let us look at the result. Previous to his entering on that undertaking, a high, but in these days an ordinary, salary, was all that he could obtain in London ; while, in the provinces, but few managers were to be found who would wish to engage him at all. At the time I am making these memoranda, he is making, or has made, an engagement with Mr. Hammond to perform at Drury Lane Theatre, on a weekly salary of 100*l.* for four nights, or rather one of 25*l.* per night, (an engagement Mr. Hammond will rue, as long as he can hold the reins of management,)—while, in the provinces, he has had the effrontery to ask of mine excellent friend Davidge, who has just taken a lease of the Bath Theatre, HALF THE CLEAR RECEIPTS of one Saturday, and has expressed his willingness to play two Saturdays more for 60*l.* each night ; the said Saturday of course fixed upon, as being by many degrees the best night in the whole week ! Nothing like “ the voice of the public press ” after all ! and nothing, seemingly, like “ outrageous exaggeration.”

A little cool reflection will convince any man that the pretence which accompanied the production of Shakspeare’s plays under Mr. Macready’s management, was a worthless piece of puffery, intended to

obtain for the actor a mental reputation, by virtue of the paraphernalia bestowed on the production of the works of the author: and a little more reflection will convince all, that Shakspeare's noblest plays had been far better acted, and much more elaborately produced, in both the patent theatres, than at any time they were under the management of this noble fellow, who stepped forward, with "responsibilities to him most serious," to advance the drama *as a branch of national literature and ART!!*

After such a flourishing address as the one we have been examining, it was but natural to suppose that some wonderful collection of talent had been engaged, to delight and astound the citizens of London—that the rival theatre possessed none to be compared to it, and that "scenic illusion" was altogether out of the question, save and except at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. I will therefore subjoin a list of the respective forces—name opposite to name, as far as principals are concerned, with which the two theatres were to carry on their respective operations:—

*Drury Lane Theatre.*

Mr. Charles Kean .

Mr. Butler }

Mr. Cooper }

Mr. Dowton .

Mr. Balfe .

Mr. Templeton }

Mr. Frazer }

*Covent Garden Theatre.*

. Mr. Macready

. Mr. Elton

. Mr. Bartley

. Mr. H. Phillips (*half of the  
season at Drury Lane*)

- Mr. Wilson

Mr. Anderson	}	.	.	Mr. Manvers
Mr. Duruset				
Mr. Giubelei	}	.	.	Mr. Leffler
Mr. E. Seguin				
Mr. Buckstone	}	.	.	Mr. Webster ( <i>who left in disgust</i> )
Mr. Compton				
Miss Romer	.	.	.	Miss Shirreff
Miss H. Cawne	.	.	.	Miss Land
Miss Poole	.	.	.	Miss Vincent
Miss Forde	.	.	.	Miss P. Horton
Mrs. E. Seguin	.	.	.	* * * *
Mrs. Fitzwilliam	.	.	.	Mrs. Humby
Mrs. C. Jones	.	.	.	Mrs. Glover
Mrs. Stanley	.	.	.	Miss Huddart
Miss Charles	.	.	.	Miss Taylor
Mrs. Ternan	.	.	.	Miss H. Faucit
Madame Celeste	.	.	.	* * * *
Mr. Gilbert	}			* * * *
Mr. Weiland				
Miss Ballin				
Madame Proche Giubelei				
A full corps de ballet	.	.	.	A few dancers
The largest and ablest band	.	.	.	A small and indifferent band
The fullest and best	}	.		A few indifferent chorus singers
chorus in London				
Mr. Grieve	}	.		Mr. Marshall.
Mr. T. Grieve				
Mr. W. Grieve				

I will defy any unprejudiced person, in looking over the two lists, to deny that the Drury Lane is by far the most effective one, and the parties named in it better able to represent any sample of the drama. In comedy we were both bad enough, Heaven knows: in tragedy (the managerial cock's own dunghill) we completely passed him by; in opera

and ballet we had full treble his force, and in "scenic illusion" we laughed him to scorn. But then he was in possession of "the voice of the public press," (as before described,) and for the moment they who read, believed all they *did* read. What do they believe now? What does he believe himself? Why, what Rochefoucault believed, when he asserted, "Le vrai moyen d'être trompé, c'est de se croire plus fin que les autres."

## CHAPTER XI.

Doubts respecting Killigrew's patent solved, and the hopes of a good fee dissolved—Liston's retirement—Mr. Percy Farren—An actor's want of judgment—Exemplification of the royal visit—The valuable contents of one house, and the valueless contents of another—Garrick and Mrs. Piozzi—Virginius, Caractacus, and other Romans—Mr. Otway and the other "rum-uns"—Presentation of a piece of plate—A difference of opinion—Restoration of the text of Shakspeare—Joan of Arc—Value of a tail—Epigram—Barry O'Meara—A dwarf—A painter's last work *not* his last work—Dependence on a play-bill—How to know the contents of a parcel before you open it—and how to tell a good lie.

THE rumours which had been at various times afloat respecting the existence of Killigrew's patent, some asserting that it perished in the fire of 1809 which destroyed Drury Lane Theatre, others that it was in pawn with certain bankers for certain sums of gold—others that it never existed at all—were at the beginning of this season (1837-38) silenced altogether. The harpies of the Lord Chamberlain's office, with noses as sensitive for a fee as a ferret's for a rat, despatched a missive to Drury Lane Thea-

tre to inquire by what authority I had presumed to announce its re-opening. It was not an altogether unnatural proceeding on their part ; because, having done all in their power to render its opening a more hazardous speculation than usual, their consistency would have been at stake, had they not tried to prevent its opening at all. At the same time be it known, that the running patent of George III., granted in 1816, expired the beginning of September this year ; and as there was a large sum paid for it, there seemed to be the prospect of another large sum being to be paid for its renewal. When informed that I opened the Theatre Royal Drury Lane under Killigrew's patent, I was called upon to produce it. I might have refused ; because it was the bounden duty of the Lord Chamberlain's people to know of its disposition : but to prevent any confusion, I apprised the gentleman who waited upon me that its purchase from the Covent Garden proprietors was completed on the 17th of December, 1813, by the payment of a balance of 9,561*l.* 19*s.* 5*d.* due to them thereon ; and producing a tin box entrusted to me for the occasion, by that valuable index to all such matters, Mr. Dunn, I displayed before the wondering eyes of the disappointed official the document itself, bearing the signature of "Howard," with the appendage of his lordship's ponderous seal of power.

A manager who is not an actor can have but one object in view—the honourable fulfilment of his engagements by every honourable means. Having no

parts to study, and no parts to play—having no vanity to indulge in, and no personal ambition to gratify, he is enabled to devote his exclusive attention to the onerous and arduous duties of the cabinet, and if he does not, he deserves to be pelted. I have suffered much more abuse for faults it was alleged I had committed, than for any I ever *did* commit: but inwardly convinced that my desire, however luckily or unluckily carried out, was to advance the profession and amuse the public, I have been enabled for many years to afford a smile at the efforts of the petty rogues who have been spitting their spite at me. I endured much more of this precious contumely on the present occasion, than during the whole previous years of my management. First of all, because my opponent had procured “the voice of the public press;” and secondly, because I could not, with safety to the theatre, and with any feeling of common decency to the respected and influential journals long established, put all the newly sprung up rabble on the free list, and thus secure their “voices.” I was content, therefore, or, if not content, obliged, to submit to their abuse. I did not, however, let it deter me from my duty, or from directing all my efforts towards the gratification of the people. Amongst other pursuits, I was bent on securing, if possible, the services of Mr. Liston, (whose secession from the Olympic led to Farren’s\* burthensome engagement there,) deserv-

\* The various observations made on Mr. W. Farren in these

edly the most popular comedian, whose popularity has been made, and enjoyed, by a London audience. What talent has there been in the remembrance of modern playgoers, what is there, and what is there likely to be, at all comparable with this extraordinary artist? Who, besides Liston, is capable of setting an audience in a roar of laughter *before* he

volumes, have only reference to what I consider the ruinous nature of the demands invariably preferred by him ; privately, he is respected by all who know him, and by none more than his *quondam* manager, Monsieur Bunn, arising out of an intimacy of many years with himself and brothers. Though the insertion of the following letter may subject me to a charge of vanity, I prefer incurring it to the omission of so gratifying a testimony of the good fellowship long existing between his excellent brother, Percy Farren, and myself :

“ Wednesday October 1, 1837.

“ 46, Stamford-street.

“ MY DEAR BUNN,

“ I have known you upwards of eighteen years. On every occasion  
 “ which brought us together as managers or actors, my experience has  
 “ invariably found the courtesy of a gentleman united with the  
 “ straight-forwardness of a man of business. The destruction of the  
 “ Brunswick Theatre, in proving to me the real goodness of your heart,  
 “ also proved your personal estimation of myself. Circumstances pre-  
 “ vented my accepting the proffered mark of (may I say ?) friendship ;  
 “ but it will *never* be forgotten. It is my nature to be deeply grate-  
 “ ful for even a *show* of kindness, and my principle always to acknow-  
 “ ledge it. In our present relative situations, the most suspicious could  
 “ not SUSPECT me of a *motive* in doing so. Though I have left the  
 “ profession, I like NOW and THEN to see plays. That pleasure will  
 “ not be diminished by the belief that the freedom of doing so is not  
 “ sent by the *lessee* to a retired manager and actor, but by Alfred  
 “ Bunn to his old acquaintance and well-wisher,

“ P. FARREN.”



opens his mouth, and throwing them into convulsions after he *has* opened it? I have had occasion, in a former part of this work, to refer to the want of judgment\* and tact Mr. Liston as well as most other performers are perpetually guilty of; nor will my admiration of his or their abilities be any bar to my expression of such error wherever I find it; but "the judgment must be weak, and the prejudice strong" indeed, that could deny to this inimitable actor all the humorous glories of his art. It has been a habit since this period, (1837,) on either theatre commencing its campaign, to circulate a report of the probability of Mr. Liston's return to the

\* I will give you an additional instance of such being the fact, to the one cited at page 185. When Mr. Liston refused to play in *The Good-looking Fellow*, I wanted him to play in a new farce by Buckstone, called *The Christening*, which has since been so successful at the Adelphi; he refused, preferring the quieter but unattractive farce of *Pleasant Dreams* by Mr. C. Dance, in which he appeared twelve nights, to an average of 130*l.* per night, and for appearing in which he received 20*l.* per night. This was his ground of refusal:

" Sunday, March 4, 1834.

" DEAR SIR,

" As was said of '*She Stoops to Conquer*,' Mr. Buckstone's Farce is a barrel of gunpowder; and I do not deem it prudent, therefore, to commence with that: the failure of the piece would be the failure of the engagement altogether, a result which, I suppose, neither of us desires.

" Pray let the copyist send me as much of the part in Mr. Dance's farce as he has written out.

" Yours, &c.

" J. LISTON.

" To A. Bunn, Esq."

stage ; but as his character is a guarantee for his word, I may as well subjoin a reply to an offer I made him to perform during this season of 1837-1838 :

“ Penn, near Beaconsfield,

“ Sept. 14, 1837.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I gratefully acknowledge your obliging invitation to Drury Lane Theatre, and also the very liberal terms which accompany your offer of an engagement. Having, however, decided never to re-appear on the stage, I am compelled to decline it.

“ With mine, Mrs. Liston begs you to accept her thanks, compliments, and good wishes.

“ Believe me, my dear Sir,

“ Very truly your obliged

J. LISTON.

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“ London.”

Early in this season our youthful Sovereign, having taken the drama under her especial patronage, gave it the countenance of her presence by coming in state to each theatre. Drury Lane Theatre may boast of having been the first place of public entertainment in which “ the fair-haired daughter of the Isles ” was received as Queen with

the heartfelt welcome of hundreds of her subjects,  
anxious to pay becoming homage to one

“ Good without effort, great without a foe.”

The prices on this occasion were raised from the unrequiting standard to which they had been reduced, to the scale—no higher—at which they formerly stood; thereby securing the respectability of the audience, and putting about 150*l.* more into the treasury than the reduced prices could do; and the following return of the contents of the theatre will let the reader into the secret of what Drury Lane Theatre will hold:—

Amount of the receipts on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's first state visit to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Wednesday, November 15, 1837:—

FIRST PRICE.						SECOND PRICE.					
£. s. d.						£. s. d.					
Box,	P. S.	-	-	43	1 0	-	-	14	0 0		
	O. P.	-	-	32	18 0	-	-	16	19 6		
Pit,	P. S.	-	-	65	5 6	-	-	1	11 6		
	O. P.	-	-	72	19 6	-	-	0	16 0		
Gallery		-	-	46	8 0	-	-	2	0 6		
„	Upper	-		17	0 0						
						277	12 0				
						35 7 6					
Box tickets	-	-		246	19 6						
Private Boxes, <i>exclu-</i>											
<i>sive of annual ones,</i>				138	4 6						
Passes	-	-	-	4	11 0	-	-	0	15 0		
Stalls	-	-	-	58	16 0						
Total -						£726	3 0	36 2 6			

The enthusiasm of the people seemed to admit of no abatement—their hearts were in their hands; and gratified by their enthusiasm, and pleased, as she condescended to express herself, with the performance, her Majesty imparted new life to the hitherto drooping scene around her. On the following Friday, the Queen honoured Covent Garden Theatre with her presence. On this occasion the immaculate lessee not only determined on no increase of prices, but, by a dignified announcement of his determination, sought to disparage the view I had taken up to the contrary. *He* was bent, the good people were informed, on not allowing *his* prices to be raised, upon ANY PRETEXT WHATEVER; while *I* was bent on raising them to the scale demanded, and paid, on all preceding state affairs. Being curious to witness the difference of company the difference of price always brings, and to see how such company conducted itself before royalty, a party of us occupied a private box. A scene of greater blackguardism, of outrage, of the violation almost of common decency, was never known in a theatre—for, owing to the admission into the pit of many more people than it was calculated by possibility to hold with the slightest degree of comfort, a tumult occurred, in which the oaths of the men and the screams of the women struggled for pre-eminence; while the lessee, dressed up as *Werner*, was pacing up and down the stage in dumb-show, biting his lip and rolling his eye, amidst the internal

workings of ill-concealed rage, Mr. Serjeant Eitherside, (Bartley,) having asked the permission of royalty to address the mob, was endeavouring so to do in front of the said stage.

But females were fainting, and males were fighting, and it was therefore necessary that something should be done, and speedily. All that *could* be effected, *was* effected; and a pretty sight, to be sure, it exhibited. Some gentlemen seated in the public boxes, *directly opposite her MAJESTY*, with the assistance of the police, drew up a breathless set of wretches from the pit, over the front of the boxes, into the lobbies, by which operation their backs were necessarily exposed to the public gaze as well as to that of their Sovereign—some fellows with half a coat left—others with a hole in the coat they had on—others with holes in their nether garments—some shoeless—some stockless—most hatless, or bonnetless;—and as these deficiencies became visible to the audience, they indulged in merriment at the expense of sympathy, and turned the whole occurrence into one disgraceful scene of hooting, holloaing, hissing, and laughter. A pretty mode *THIS of advancing the drama as a branch of national literature and art*, on the first occasion of the Queen of England coming in state, to enable the lessee to carry such commendable object into effect! It is impossible to conceive a more thoroughly black-guard exhibition—a more complete introduction of St. Giles's to St. James's, and one which, if it had

no other ill effect, delayed the commencement of the performances three quarters of an hour. But the cry of legitimacy having been raised, was for the time kept up ; and all these monstrosities, which, had they occurred at Drury Lane, would have justly subjected me to severe rebuke, passed by without comment, or certainly without reproof, at Covent Garden :

“ Multi

Committunt eadem diverso crimina fato,

Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.”

My friend Planché perpetrated an awful failure, at this time, in the instance of a play in five acts, under the fatal title of *Caractacus*. That he did with it all a man of his experience could do with such a subject, and one which he feared and disliked, is beyond a question ; but, in addition to that, he had to contend with some of the worst acting that could be imagined or endured. The latter part of the infliction was one not of long continuance, for it was “endured” but a few evenings, notwithstanding the introduction in it of as splendid a piece of spectacle, exhibiting a Roman triumph in all its glories, as ever was put upon a stage. However, all our dramas in connexion with this remote period of history have proved unattractive, save in the instance of the principal characters in them being represented by the “last of all the Romans,” Mr. John Kemble, who supplied the place of gewgaw by his sublime performance. I recollect the

late Mrs. Piozzi, with whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted in the latter years of her life, confirming this observation. I was describing to her the representation of *Virginus* by Mr. Conway, (at that time my stage manager), in whose welfare she took a lively interest; and remarking that it ought to bring more money than it did, she replied, "I perfectly remember Mr. Garrick, somewhere about the middle of the last century, electrifying the auditors of old Drury Lane Theatre, by his delivery of two words, 'THOU TRAITOR!' addressed to *Appius Claudius*; but *Virginus* was, nevertheless, the least attractive of all Garrick's performances." The peculiarity of the expression, "somewhere about the middle of the last century," delivered as if we had been of the same age, and in a manner with which one discusses the disputed date of a dinner-party, amused me the more as I was then "somewhere about" twenty-two, while the garrulous and delightful old lady was within a few days of eighty-two, having that morning invited me to the celebration of her eighty-second anniversary. These are delightful recollections, albeit the loss of those they struggle to commemorate is not likely to be made up by any existing associations.

The failure of *Caractacus* led to the renewal of a species of persecution I had long been subject to, even to a greater extent than the managers of Covent Garden and the Haymarket theatres, from a half madman, by the histrionic appellation of

Otway. I hope I am as fond of a bit of fun as any of my neighbours; but between the ravings, the conceit, the ignorance, (as to stage matters,) the ridicule, the foolery, mixed up in his actions, there is no fun whatever. By birth, connexion, and education, I believe Capt. Hicks (his real name) to be a perfect gentleman; I have never heard the breath of slander pass over him—but on the one point,—of the drama,—he is a decided lunatic. Yet, with the cunning for which all such unfortunate people are remarkable, he places you occasionally in a difficult position to deal with, by the adoption of an apparently sound reasoning. Mr. Otway has thrust himself so repeatedly before the public with the same luckless result, that he is a fair subject for examination. His first appearance before a London audience was under the management of Elliston, in his pet character of *Hamlet*; and owing to his disappointing the audience both by his performance and his non-performance, a young actor in the company, 'yclept Hamblin, played the part for him—memorable only from the circumstance of Elliston calling that actor into the green-room, and addressing him to this effect:—"Young man, you have not only pleased the public, but you have pleased me; and as a slight token of my regard and good wishes, I beg your acceptance of a small piece of plate!" It was beyond any question a *very* small piece, for it was a silver tooth-pick. I missed the worthy captain, after this occurrence, for several years, when in the



year 1833 he perched himself one morning in my room, and favoured me with his view of London management, and his opinion of his own acting; and from that day I could never get rid of him. Though he failed at one house, could not complete his failure at another, and got thoroughly laughed at in both, still he stuck to me like a leech; and as mischievous persons were to be found willing to insert in some public prints any trash he thought proper to write, I at last became the subject of his scurrilous attacks. He then beset me at the stage-door, in the box-office, and even in the streets; and I have more than once resolved on sending him to some station-house. Finding his importunities thus far fruitless, he induced the editor of the *Observer* to insert this letter in his columns:

“ TO ALFRED BUNN, ESQ.

“ OF THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

“ Saturday, October 28, 1837.

“ SIR,

“ As I presume you have now completed, with  
“ the exception of Mr. Kean, (prior to whose ap-  
“ pearance some time will elapse,) the trial of those  
“ aspirants who seek for metropolitan favour as  
“ tragedians, in spite of the opposition you have  
“ manifested towards my employment hitherto, my  
“ services are still at your command; and as the  
“ line I would attempt leaves ample scope for such  
“ characters as, probably, Mr. Kean hopes to excel  
“ in, it might not be ill-timed for you to make the

“ experiment of my ability. I should have no objection to take either of the principal characters in *Julius Cæsar* for my *début*, to be followed by *Coriolanus*, grounding the value of my services upon the only estimate competent to determine them, viz. *public approbation*, having at the same time regard to your nightly receipts: not fearing that, could I once appear before you, our parting would be as unwilling as our approximation has been rendered unfortunately difficult. In looking to the opposition which *has been forced upon me in self-defence*, and from which, on my terms, *no possible good could have arisen to me* in which you would not have been the main recipient; (you cannot fail to see the redeeming quality,—that my efforts *have been fair and above-board*;) and if I have been severe in my strictures upon *measures of a bad tendency*, yet I flatter myself you have no stronger partisan in anything that admits of just approbation. I have thought this letter, for various reasons, to be the best public.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ EDWARD OTWAY.”

He followed up this nonsensical public tirade by the subjoined private note, commencing with the familiarity of “Dear Sir,” after all the vulgar abuse of which he had been so lavish; conceiving, evidently, that the failure of *Caractacus* had created a chasm that he was capable altogether of filling up:

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I presume you will readily comprehend the motives which have impelled my public letter to you in *The Observer*, viz. in the first place to obviate the difficulty of any acquiescence on your part by the *application* originating with me ; and secondly, not to afford a plea that any *unbecoming compromise* had taken place on either side. If you like to underline me for *Hamlet* on Friday, which is to be played at the ‘ Garden,’ I will do my best for you ; but the notice will be so short, that you must not be disappointed if we should fail in a house ; but please God, you would have another sort of one on the Monday. I merely, however, suggest this, feeling that you must be in some difficulty by the reception of last night’s play ; and I apprehend whatever I may do will not interfere with Mr. Kean, as it is his NAME that is to do you good in the first place, and because *Hamlet* could be at once got up.

“ Yours, dear sir, obediently,

“ EDWARD OTWAY.

“ A. Bunn, Esq., 25, Bow-street,

“ Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1837.”

What was to be done with such an irredeemable booby on stage tactics as this unfortunate man ? The public had conveyed *their* opinion to him ; I had repeatedly conveyed *mine* ; he would not admit

the one, and thought the other prejudice. I therefore deemed it best, for the purpose of silencing him for the future, and to prevent the possibility of his few partisans laying a charge of prepossession against me, to give the opportunity he so doggedly sought for of appearing on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre. I did this against my judgment, and was determined, in conceding the point, to record my opinion, and to publish that opinion in the paper which had permitted Mr. Otway to favour me at various times with so much of his abuse. I therefore sent this reply to Mr. Otway's last letter, and a copy of it to his ally, the editor of the *Observer* :

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

“ Nov. 8, 1837.

“ SIR,

“ Without entering upon the question of your  
“ gross and unfounded attacks upon me, which I am  
“ told have from time to time appeared in the pub-  
“ lic prints, and are utterly beneath even contempt,  
“ I reply to the renewed offer of service contained  
“ in your public letter to ‘ The Observer ’ on Sun-  
“ day last, and your private communication to me  
“ of yesterday. *You* believe yourself to be one of  
“ the best performers of the day, *I* believe you to be  
“ one of the worst ; but as the manager of a theatre  
“ should never act upon prejudice, I will leave the  
“ public to judge between us, by announcing you for

" *Hamlet*, as soon as you have entered into the  
" necessary arrangement with me for doing so.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" A. BUNN.

" E. Otway, Esq."

Instead of taking any angry notice of this effusion, Mr. Otway waited upon me at the theatre; and being aware of the kind of man I had to deal with, I requested Mr. Russell, the stage manager, to hear what passed, in order that no perversion of my remarks might appear in print, well knowing that he would not circulate what I DID say. My worthy friend, JERRY, (the nomenclature by which Mr. Russell's admirable performance in the *Mayor of Garrett* has long since distinguished him,) laughed immoderately at the interview, from the extreme placidity with which Mr. Otway received the fire he had himself been the cause of being directed against him; and it ended in his being announced, under sundry restrictions, to play *Hamlet* the following Monday. One of the main limitations imposed upon him was, that he should on no consideration address the audience; knowing that silly harangues very often lead to serious consequences. He pledged his honour, and he violated his pledge; for on his re-entry, after killing *Polonius*, setting the audience on the titter, he told them the fault was none of his, for the scene had not been set

for him at rehearsal. Certainly it had not that day, because no part of *Hamlet* beyond the scenes with *Ophelia* was rehearsed that day, a full rehearsal having taken place on the preceding Saturday. However, the curtain fell, and the audience fell too, laughing, hissing, and mocking, and heroically applauding, mixed with the genuine approbation of a few pitying varlets, who were witnesses of a man bred and born a perfect gentleman, and entitled to move in society, so lost as to come forward, and mistaking, or choosing to mistake, such a scene for an ebullition of public favour, to bow repeatedly in acknowledgment of so much kindness. Poor fellow! Divested of this fearful mania, there is a pleasing manner, a gentlemanly address, and a melancholy replete with interest, pervading every action of Mr. Otway.

The spirit with which the lease of the rival theatre had been entered upon, now began to manifest itself in the most glaring colours, and was carried out in a manner not merely unworthy, but decidedly injurious to the administration. It was no secret that an opera, founded on the adventures of *Joan of Arc*, had been in preparation at Drury Lane Theatre since the summer; and it is no secret that a composition of this description cannot be hurried, like the painting of a scene, or the making up of a dress. Availing himself of this information, Mr. Macready became suddenly inspired with the idea of cutting my throat, (theatrically speaking;) and

at a very short notice, as our labours were drawing towards a completion, he prepared and produced a spectacle under the same title, and precisely, of course, on the same subject. There can be very little doubt but that he had an object in view, beyond the mere fact of forestalling our production: and that object was to uphold, by means of a pageant, the performances which, without such a pageant, were deterring people from entering his theatre. Thus the very charge which had been levelled against me—that of placing my reliance more on pageantry than poetry—was negatived by the very party making it, through their adoption of a similar course of action. The humbug began to make its appearance in a very palpable light; and it was becoming daily manifest that a positive outrage was being committed on the works of the great bard, instead of the homage so vauntingly stated to be paid to them, by endeavouring to render them palatable to the people through the medium of decorative matter, in the absence of even tolerable acting. As soon as it was known that the text of Shakspeare was only so far restored as to suit the purposes of the principal actor—that principal actor being the lessee—that the general talent of the company was degraded merely to uphold the said lessee—that more attention was paid to the *mise en scène* than to the acting of the bard's immortal legacies—and that the very principle the said lessee had decried in another he now resorted to himself, the

worthy public, with every disposition to stand a good deal, could not stand that, and general dissatisfaction began to prevail.

The circumstances relative to *Joan of Arc* would not have occurred in any thoroughly dramatic city; the manager would have deemed such a trick unworthy of adoption; or, if he had not, the public would not have sanctioned it. The Drury Lane bills denounced it in the following manner—a more important notice, perhaps, than such pettiness was entitled to:

“JOAN OF ARC.

“A new grand opera in three acts, composed expressly for this theatre by M. W. Balfe, has been a considerable time in preparation; and notwithstanding any impudent assumption of its title or character elsewhere, it will not be produced until the necessary musical and scenic rehearsals enable the lessee to place it before the public in that manner they are accustomed to expect in all novelties produced at this theatre.”

A violation of one of the principal rules laid down in the first announcement issued by the new management—that of omitting all “outrageous exaggeration” respecting the success of their novelties, was now carried into effect; in addition to the invariable assistance of “the butcher’s cur” in the public journals. To be sure, there was no direct state-



ment that the success of their new spectacle had eclipsed that of all its predecessors, that the audience were thrown into fits, and other such interesting displays: but the one word, JOAN OF ARC, was spread across the fly-sheet of their play-bills in letters, each of the size of a young coach-wheel; by which it was determined, that however illiterate the manager might be, at all events his *affiches* should be *well read*! Theory and practice are very different ingredients in the vocabulary of a manager; inasmuch as the "theory" he contemplates before he opens his theatre, is invariably contradicted by the "practice" he resorts to after he HAS opened it. The confidence of the public in the new lessee began to be shaken—mine could not be, because I never had any; a similar instance of which I recorded at this time, with reference to matters of more importance, viz.

## EPIGRAM

ON HEARING THAT HER MAJESTY'S MINISTERS HAD LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE:

" 'Tis said they've lost, by its abuse,  
Our confidence—but I'd be glad  
To know how they could ever lose  
What one amongst them never had!"

Different men adopt different ways of obtaining notoriety. Eady, Hunt, Warren, Turner and Co., "have had their tithe of talk;" poor Cocking, in

order to rise in the world, went up in a parachute ; and Mr. Macready took Covent Garden Theatre to endeavour (" the attempt and not the deed ") to prove himself a Shaksperian actor. Barry O'Meara\* records in his " Voice from St. Helena " a favourite expression of Napoleon, " Il regno di bugie non durera per sempre," and the fallen chieftain never said a truer thing.

Would not a stranger, in perusing the following letter, imagine that it came from some extraordinary foreign *artiste*, who, having established a great reputation in the leading theatres of the continent, sought to reap a golden harvest from the exercise of his talents here? Would he not imagine that although the writer had heard favourable reports of Drury Lane Theatre and its manager, he was utterly ignorant, beyond those reports, of anything in connexion with one or the other? But read the letter, and judge :

" Paris, le 3 8bre, 1837.

" MONSIEUR,

" Je n'ai que trois pieds de haut physiquement,  
" mais je possède une réputation beaucoup plus

\* I very much regret that I never met Mr. O'Meara, after his return from St. Helena, but once ; and that was at the table of Mr. Power the comedian. My eldest brother, in command of the *Mangles* East Indiaman, was attended by O'Meara at St. Helena, on his removal from Longwood, for an attack of dysentery ; the virulence of which carried him off, despite the skill and attention of so able a practitioner.

“ haute dans l’art dramatique comme mime excep-  
“ tionnel.

“ J’ai donné des représentations de pantomimes  
“ avec des exercices que personne n’a fait avant  
“ moi dans les principales capitales de l’Europe, et  
“ qui ont obtenu le plus grand succès.

“ Apte à prendre la forme de l’animal le plus  
“ agile, chien, singe, ou chat, je suis parvenue même  
“ à paraître devant le public sous la forme d’une  
“ mouche, et, comme ces capricieux volatiles, je par-  
“ coeurs une salle de spectacle en tous sens. D’une  
“ bouquet de fleurs, je m’élançai au ceintre de la salle,  
“ et tourne autour du lustre en courant sur le  
“ plafond.

“ Différens auteurs des pays que j’ai parcourus ont  
“ composé pour mon genre special des pièces, des  
“ farces qui ont produit partout un grand effet et  
“ m’ont fait faire beaucoup d’argent. Je suis con-  
“ vaincu, Monsieur, que ces pièces traduites et ar-  
“ rangées pour la scène Anglaise, et surtout pour le  
“ théâtre que vous dirigez, dit-on, habilement, ob-  
“ tiendrait à Londres un succès de vogue. S’il  
“ vous convient donc de traiter avec moi, j’attendrai  
“ votre réponse à Paris, cité Bergère, No 3.

“ J’ai l’honneur de vous saluer,

“ HARVEY IL NANO.

“ P.S.—Les pièces que je monte ne demandent  
“ que peu de dépenses attendu, que j’ai toutes les  
“ machines nécessaires à mes exercices.”

Mark the dwarf's expression, "le théâtre que vous dirigez, dit-on, habilement," as though he had suddenly dropped from the clouds, and heard by accident, by a mere "dit-on," of the management of the theatre! A few years ago this person used to haunt the stage-doors of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, and was occasionally taken up, on the sly, by some actor into the green-room, to favour the performers with specimens of his recitation in *Richard the Third* and other characters, his real name being Leech, instead of that of any travelled foreigner, and his father having been, if I remember rightly, attached in some menial capacity to one or other of these buildings. But the period of the year being near at hand when pantomime was to be put in full preparation, the manager was then, as he always is, subject to every species of application from professors of the marvellous, and he may consider himself a fortunate fellow if he escape even half the humbug that is attempted to be practised upon him. Rope-dancers, posture-masters, patent skaters, tumblers, strong men, flies, and fools of every description, tender their services for the celebration of this momentous event. Speculating on the chance of a pig, or a donkey, or live poultry, being required in the pantomime, and knowing that a shilling a night is paid for the use of such properties, it is no uncommon thing for a rogue to turn dealer in such articles, and rear them in the hope of realizing a nightly profit by them. Master Leech

betook himself to foreign parts, from the impossibility of exciting the wonder of his own countrymen ; and having formerly failed to do that, there could be no objection now to his testing their gullibility. And thus it is, that a London manager, to have any chance of escaping purgatory, must have his eyes and his ears unusually open, watched as he is in all directions, and with so few allowances made for the errors into which he too frequently and unintentionally falls.

The production of the Covent Garden pantomime this year was signalled by the enlistment of Mr. Stanfield in the cause of " the drama's restoration." We had better, to prevent mistakes, give the announcement of this national event in the words of Mr. Macready's own play-bill :

" The manager of this theatre trusts the public  
" will not consider it a deviation from the rule uni-  
" formly observed by him, if, in announcing the en-  
" tertainments prepared, according to established  
" usage, for this season of the year, he acknowledges  
" expressly, and *particularly under the PARTICULAR*  
" *circumstances*, his obligations to *Mr. Stanfield*.  
" That distinguished artist, at a sacrifice, and in a  
" manner the most liberal and kind, has for a short  
" period laid aside his easel to present the manager  
" with his LAST WORK in a department of art so  
" conspicuously advanced by him, as a mark of the

“ interest he feels in the success of the cause which  
“ this theatre labours to support.”

Considering the many learned heads that were at this time connected with the cabinet of Covent Garden Theatre, some purer specimen of the English language might have been drawn up ; but that is, however, a secondary consideration, when so important a circumstance as it records is duly weighed, it being neither more nor less than this : Mr. Stanfield, desirous of aiding the cause Covent Garden Theatre was labouring to support, at a sacrifice and in a manner the most liberal and kind, “ painted a scene in the pantomime !” “ The cause ” the said theatre professed to support, was the advancement of the *drama as a branch of national literature and art* ; and to uphold the national literature, Mr. Stanfield painted a diorama ! Bravo, Messrs. Macready and Stanfield ! The reader having been apprised of the *apparent* cause, may as well be let into the *latent* one, viz. that “ the cause Mr. Macready *was* labouring to support,” was to support himself by every principle of puff imaginable ; and he knew of no better means of so doing (Shakspeare having failed in his hands) than engaging Stanfield in the painting-room—ONE latent motive : ANOTHER was, that hating me with his “ heart’s extremest hate,” and imagining, from the circumstances connected with this scene-painter’s secession from Drury Lane Theatre, that

the said Stanfield had no holy love for me, he had thus the power of indulging in a double gratification. We will pass over the humbug of its being Stanfield's *last* work, until we come to his subsequent efforts in the same "cause," introduced in *Henry V.*, and lay before our readers the rejoinder to so much nonsense which appeared in the Drury Lane play-bills :

" The manager of this theatre does not intend on  
" the present occasion, '*particularly under the par-*  
" *ticular circumstances,*' to make any deviation from  
" the rule uniformly observed by him, in announcing  
" the entertainments prepared, of rendering every  
" possible justice to the different artists engaged ;  
" and although he does not think the painting a  
" few scenes in a pantomime '*particularly*' calcu-  
" lated to support the cause of the British drama  
" '*as a branch of literature and art,*' he still begs to  
" state that those celebrated artists, the Messieurs  
" Grieve, have been some time past actively occu-  
" pied upon a new, grand, moving panorama, (of  
" which Mr. Grieve, senior, was a few years since  
" the inventor,) on an interesting national subject ;  
" which the public will be delighted to hear, from  
" the high estimation in which the talents of  
" those gentlemen are held, is *not* to be *their* LAST  
" WORK !"

Two brighter bits of absolute rubbish cannot well be put in print, the features of which may be thus distinguished : one was the exhibition of as much

stage quackery as can be conceived ; and the other was merely the exposition of it.

The diorama, however, painted by Stanfield on the occasion in question, was really beautiful ; and lucky was it for Mr. Macready's individual want of attraction that it took shelter under the wings of this artist's genius ; for, by the aid his pencil brought the Covent Garden treasury, tragedy could again venture to peep out.\* Until the introduction of his diorama, Covent Garden theatre had been, on tragedy nights, in the situation the Manchester theatre was on the occasion of poor Sowerby's benefit, as related to me by himself. He had, by sundry visitations of inebriation, incurred the severest displeasure of the cotton-spinners, which they marked in a signal manner, by keeping away from the theatre on the sole night their presence could have been useful to him. Just as the curtain was about to rise, Sowerby went up into the gallery, carrying a lantern at the end of a pitchfork, and stumbling over the only two individuals there seated, viz. the fruit-woman and her boy, he exclaimed, " Don't be alarmed, my worthy people, I am come upon the errand of *Diogenes*, but with this

\* A humorous friend of mine, seeing a parcel lying on the table in the entrance-hall of the theatre, one side of which, from its having travelled to town by the side of some game, was smeared with blood, observed, " That parcel contains a manuscript tragedy." And on being asked why, replied, " Because *the fifth act* is peeping out at one corner of it."



difference in our pursuits—that he went about the world looking for an honest man, and I am looking in vain for any man at all!”

The play-bill under discussion incurred the designation of a “whoreson lying knave,” from all Shaksperian commentators not then in the interest of Covent Garden Theatre, as setting at nought the declaration, at starting, of avoiding all “outrageous exaggeration.” It reminded me forcibly of a dilemma I was witness of, many years since, in the cabinet of the late Mr. Harris. Poor Jemmy Brandon, of box-office memory, seeing a creditor nearing the theatre, went out to the door for the purpose of being accosted by him, and to the man’s inquiry, “Pray is Mr. Brandon at home?” Jemmy, well aware his person was not known by him, unhesitatingly replied, “No, sir, he is not.” In a few minutes afterwards Mr. Harris sent for Brandon, and saying, “Now, Jem, what would you advise us to say to the public?” Brandon, after a very short reflection, and passing his hand over his face to denote his having come to a conclusion, notwithstanding that his whole life had of necessity been passed in the practice, deliberately said, “SUPPOSE, FOR *once*, WE TELL ’EM A LIE!”

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